THREE TRACTATES,

The Devout Soul.
The Free-Prisoner.
The Remedie of Discontentment.

To which may be added
The Peace-maker.

BY
Jos. Hall, D. D.
and B. N.

LONDON.
Printed by *M. Flesher*, for
Nat: Butter.
M. DC. XLVI.

John

TO ALL CHRISTIAN READERS,

Grace and Peace.

THat in a time when wee heare no noiſe but of drums & Trumpets, and talk of nothing but arms, and ſieges, and battels, I ſhould write of Devotion, may ſeem to ſome of you ſtrange and unſeaſonable; to me, contrarily, it ſeems moſt fit and opportune: For when can it be more proper to direct our addreſſe to the Throne of Grace, then when we are in the very jaws of Death? Or when ſhould we goe to ſeek the face of our God, rather, then in the needfull time of trouble?

To the Reader.

Bleſſed be my God, who in the midſt of theſe woefull tumults, hath vouchſafed to give me theſe calme, and holy thoughts; which I juſtly ſuppoſe, he meant not to ſuggeſt, that they ſhould be ſmothered in the breſt wherein they were conceived, but with a purpoſe to have the beneſit communicated unto many; Who is there that needs not vehement excitations, and helps to Devotion? and when more then now? In a tempeſt the Mariners themſelves doe not onely cry every man to his God, but awaken Jonah, *that is faſt aſleep under the hatches, and chide him to his prayers. Surely, had we not been failing in our Devotions, we could not have been thus univerſally miſerable; That duty*

duty, the neglect whereof is guilty of our calamity, must in the effectuall performance of it, be the meanes of our recovery. Be but devout, and we cannot miscarry under judgements; Woe is me, the teares of penitence, were more fit to quench the publique flame, then blood. How soon would it cleare up above head, if we were but holily affected within? Could we send our zealous Ambassadours up to heaven, we could not faile of an happy peace. I direct the way; God bring us to the end; For my own particular practice; God is witnesse to my soule, that (as one, the sense of whose private affliction is swallowed up of the publique) I cease not dayly to ply the Father of mercies with my fervent prayers, that

he would, at last, be pleased, after so many streames of blood, to passe an act of Pacification in heaven: And what good heart can doe otherwise? Brethren, all ye that love God, and his Church, and his Truth, and his Anointed, and your Country, and your selves, and yours, joyn your forces with mine, and let us by an holy violence make way to the gates of heaven with our Petition, for mercy and peace; and not suffer our selves to be beaten off from the threshold of Grace, till we be answered with a condescent. He, whose goodnesse is wont to prevent our desires, will not give denials to our importunities.

Pray, and Farewell.

Norwich.

March 20. 1643.

THE DEVOVT SOULE.

SECT. I.

DEvotion is the life of Religion, the very ſoul of Piety, the higheſt imploiment of grace; and no other then the prepoſſeſſion of heaven by the Saints of God here upon earth; every improvement whereof is of more advantage and value to the Chriſtian ſoule, then all the profits and contentments which this world can afford it.

There is a kind of Art of Devotion (if we can attain unto it) whereby the practice thereof may be much advanced: Wee have

have known indeed ſome holy ſouls, which out of the generall precepts of piety, and their own happy experiments of Gods mercy, have, through the grace of God, grown to a great meaſure of perfection thisway; which yet might have been much expedited, and compleated, by thoſe helps, which the greater illumination and experience of others might have afforded them: Like as we ſee it in other faculties; there are thoſe, who out of a naturall dexterity, and their own frequent practice, have got into a ſafe poſture of defence, and have handled their weapon with commendable skill, whom yet the Fence-ſchoole might have raiſed to an higher pitch of cunning: As nature is perfited, ſo grace is not a little furthered, by Art; ſince it pleaſeth the wiſdome of God, to work ordinarily upon the ſoul, not by the immediate power of miracle, but in

in ſuch methods, and by ſuch means, as may moſt conduce to his bleſſed ends. It is true, that our good motions come from the Spirit of God; neither is it leſſe true, that all the good counſails of others proceed from the ſame Spirit; and that good Spirit cannot be croſſe to itſelfe; he therefore that infuſes good thoughts into us, ſuggeſts alſo ſuch directions, as may render us apt both to receive and improve them: If God be bounteous, we may not be idle, and neglective of our ſpirituall aids.

Sect. II.

IF you tell me (by way of inſtance in a particular act of Devotion) that there is a gift of prayer, and that the Spirit of God is not tyed to rules; I yeeld both theſe; but withall, I muſt ſay there are alſo helps of prayer,

er, and that we muſt not expect immediate inſpirations : I finde the world much miſtaken in both; They think that man hath the gift of prayer, that can utter the thoughts of his heart roundly unto God, that can expreſſe himſelfe ſmoothly in the phraſe of the holy Ghoſt, and preſſe God with moſt proper words, and paſſionate vehemence: And ſurely this is a commendable faculty, whereſoever it is : but this is not the gift of prayer; you may call it, if you will, the gift of Elocution. Doe we ſay that man hath the gift of pleading, that can talk eloquently at the Barre, that can in good termes loud and earneſtly importune the Judge for his Client; and not rather he that brings the ſtrongeſt reaſon, and quotes his books, and precedents with moſt truth, and cleareſt evidence, ſo as may convince the Jury, and perſwade the Judge ? Doe we ſay

D: Torin

ſay he hath the gift of preaching, that can deliver himſelfe in a flowing manner of ſpeech, to his hearers, that can cite Scriptures, or Fathers, that can pleaſe his auditory with the flowers of Rhetorick ; or rather, he, that can divide the Word aright, interpret it ſoundly, apply it judiciouſly, put it home to the conſcience, ſpeaking in the evidence of the Spirit, powerfully convincing the gainſayers, comforting the dejected, and drawing every ſoul nearer to heaven? The like muſt we ſay for prayer ; the gift whereof he may be truly ſaid to have, not that hath the moſt rennible tongue, (for prayer is not ſo much a matter of the lips, as of the heart) but he that hath the moſt illuminated apprehenſion of the God to whom he ſpeaks, the deepeſt ſenſe of his own wants, the moſt eager longings after grace, the ferventeſt deſires of ſupplyes from heaven ; and

and in a word, whoſe heart ſends up the ſtrongeſt groans and cries to the Father of mercies.

Neither may we look for *Enthuſiaſmes*, and immediate inſpirations; putting our ſelves upon Gods Spirit, in the ſolemn exerciſes of our invocation, without heed, or meditation; the dangerous inconvenience whereof hath been too often found in the raſh, and unwarrantable expreſſions, that have fallen from the mouths of unwary ſuppliants; but we muſt addreſſe our ſelves with due preparation, to that holy work; we muſt digeſt our ſuits; and fore-order our ſupplications to the Almighty; ſo that there may be excellent and neceſſary uſe of meet rules of our Devotion.

He, whoſe Spirit helps us to pray, and whoſe lips taught us how to pray, is an alſufficient example for us: all the skill of men, and Angels, cannot afford a more exquiſite modell of ſupplicatory

plicatory Devotion, then that bleſſer Saviour of ours gave us in the mount; led in by a divine, and heart-raiſing preface, carried out with a ſtrong and heavenly enforcement; wherein an awfull compellation makes way for petition; and petition makes way for thankſgiving; the petitions marſhalled in a moſt exact order, for ſpirituall bleſſings, which have an immediate concernment of God, in the firſt place; then for temporall favours, which concern our ſelves, in the ſecond; ſo punctuall a methode had not been obſerved by him that heareth prayers, if it had been all one to him, to have had our Devotions confuſed, and tumultuary.

Sect. III.

THere is commonly much miſtaking of Devotion as if it

it were nothing but an act of vocall prayer, expiring with that holy breath, and revived with the next task of our invocation; which is usually measured of many, by frequence, length, smoothnesse of expression, lowdnesse, vehemence; Whereas, indeed, it is rather an habituall disposition of an holy soul, sweetly conversing with God, in all the forms of an heavenly (yet awful) familiarity; and a constant intertainment of our selves here below with the God of spirits, in our sanctifyed thoughts, and affections; One of the noble exercises whereof, is our accesse to the throne of grace in our prayers; whereto may be added, the ordering of our holy attendance upon the blessed word and sacraments of the Almighty: Nothing hinders therefore, but that a stammering suppliant may reach to a more eminent devotion, then he that can deliver himselfe in

in the moſt fluent and pathetical forms of Elocution; and that our ſilence may be more devout then our noiſe. We ſhall not need to ſend you to the Cels or cloyſters for this skill; although it will hardly be beleeved, how far ſome of their contemplative men have gone in the Theory hereof; Perhaps, like as Chymiſts give rules for the attaining of that *Elixir*, which they never found; for ſure they muſt needs fail of that perfection they pretend; who erre commonly in the object of it, always in the ground of it, which is faith; ſtripped, by their opinion, of the comfortableſt uſe of it, certainty of application.

SECT. IV.

AS there may be many reſemblances betwixt Light and Devotion, ſo this one eſpecially, that as there is a light univer-

universally diffused through the ayre, and there is a particular recollection of light into the body of the sun, and starres; so it is in Devotion; There is a generall kind of Devotion that goes through the renewed heart and life of a Christian, which we may term *Habituall*, and *Virtuall*; and there is a speciall, and fixed exercise of Devotion, which wee name *Actuall*.

The soul that is rightly affected to God, is never void of an holy Devotion; where ever it is, what ever it doth, it is still lifted up to God, and fastned upon him, and converses with him; ever serving the Lord in feare, and rejoycing in him with trembling.

For the effectuall performance whereof, it is requisite first, that the heart be setled in a right apprehension of our God; without which, our Devotion is not thankleſſe only, but sinfull: With much

much labour therefore, and agitation of a mind illuminated from above, we muſt find our ſelves wrought to an high, awfull, adorative, and conſtant conceit of that incomprehenſible Majeſty, in whom we live, and move, and are; One God, in three moſt glorious Perſons, infinite in wiſdome, in power, in juſtice, in mercy, in providence, in al that he is, in al that he hath, in all that he doth; dwelling in light inacceſſible, attended with thouſand thouſands of Angels; whom yet we neither can know, (neither would it avail us if we could) but in the face of the eternall Son of his Love, our bleſſed Mediatour God and Man; who ſits at the right hand of Majeſty in the higheſt heavens; from the ſight of whoſe glorious humanity, we comfortably riſe to the contemplation of that infinite Deity, whereto it is inſeparably united; in and by him, (made

(made ours by a lively Faith) finding our persons, and obedience accepted, expecting our full redemption, and blessednesse. Here, here must our hearts be unremoveably fixed ; In his light must we see light : no cloudy occurrences of this world, no busie imployments, no painfull sufferings must hinder us from thus seeing him that is invisible.

Sect. V.

NEither doth the devout heart see his God aloof off, as dwelling above, in the circle of heaven, but beholds that infinite Spirit really present with him ; *The Lord is upon thy right hand,* saith the Psalmist ; Our bodily eye doth not more certainly see our own flesh, then the spirituall eye sees God close by us ; Yea, in us ; A mans own soul is not so intimate to himselfe, as God

God is to his ſoul; neither doe we move by him only, but in him: What a ſweet converſation therefore, hath the holy ſoule with his God? What heavenly conferences have they two, which the world is not privy to; whiles God entertaines the ſoule with the divine motions of his Spirit; the ſoul entertains God with gracious compliances? Is the heart heavy with the grievous preſſures of affliction? the ſoule goes in to his God, and pours out it ſelf before him in earneſt bemoanings, and ſupplications; the God of mercy anſwers the ſoul again, with ſeaſonable refreſhings of comfort: Is the heart ſecretly wounded and bleeding with the conſcience of ſome ſin? it ſpeedily betakes it ſelf to the great Phyſitian of the ſoul, who forthwith applies the balme of Gilead for an unfailing and preſent cure: Is the heart diſtracted with doubts? the ſoul retires to that

that inward Oracle of God for counſail, he returns to the ſoul an happy ſetlement of juſt reſolution: Is the heart deeply affected with the ſenſe of ſome ſpecial favour from his God? the ſoul breaks forth into the paſſionate voice of praiſe and thankſgiving; God returns the pleaſing teſtimony of a cheerfull acceptation: Oh bleſſed ſoul, that hath a God to go unto upon all occaſions; Oh infinite mercy of a God, that vouchſafes to ſtoop to ſuch intireneſſe with duſt and aſhes.

D^r. Preſton. It was a gracious ſpeech of a worthy Divine upon his death-bed, now breathing towards heaven, that he ſhould change his place, not his company: His converſation was now before-hand with his God, and his holy Angels; the only difference was, that he was now going to a more free and full fruition of the Lord of life, in that region of glory above, whom he had truely (though

(though with weakneſſe and imperfection) enjoyed in this vale of tears.

Sect. VI.

NOw, that theſe mutuall reſpects may bee ſure not to cool with intermiſſion, the devout heart takes all occaſions both to think of God, and to ſpeak to him. There is nothing that he ſees, which doth not bring God to his thoughts. Indeed there is no creature, wherin there are not manifeſt footſteps of omnipotence; Yea, which hath not a tongue to tell us of its Maker. *The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament ſheweth his handy-work; One day telleth another, and one night certifieth another:* Pſ.19.1,2.
Yea, O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wiſedome haſt thou made them all: The earth is full Pſ.104.24.

of thy riches, ſo is the great and wide ſea, where are things creeping innumerable, both ſmall and great beaſts: Every herbe, flower, ſpire of graſſe, every twigge and leafe; every worm and flye; every ſcale and feather; every billow and meteor, ſpeaks the power and wiſdome of their infinite Creator; *Solomon* ſends the ſluggard to the Ant; *Eſay* ſends the Jews to the Oxe and the Aſſe; Our Saviour ſends his Diſciples to the Ravens, and to the Lillies of the field; There is no creature of whom we may not learn ſomething; we ſhall have ſpent our time ill in this great ſchool of the world, if in ſuch ſtore of Leſſons, we be non-proficients in devotion. Vain Idolaters make to themſelves images of God, wherby they ſinfully repreſent him to their thoughts and adoration; could they have the wit and grace to

ſee it, God hath taken order to ſpare them this labour, in that he hath ſtamped in every creature ſuch impreſſions of his infinite power, wiſdome, goodnes, as may give us juſt occaſion to worſhip and praiſe him with a ſafe and holy advantage to our ſouls: *For the inviſible things of God from the Creation of the world, are clearly ſeen, being underſtood by the things that are made, even his eternall power and Godhead.* And indeed, wherefore ſerve all the volumes of Naturall hiſtory, but to be ſo many Commentaries upon the ſeverall creatures, wherein we may reade God; and even thoſe men who have not the skill, or leiſure to peruſe them, may yet out of their own thoughts, and obſervation, raiſe from the ſight of all the works of God ſufficient matter to glorifie him. Who can be ſo ſtupide as not to take notice of the induſtry of the

Bee, the providence of the Ant, the cunning of the Spider, the reviving of the Flye, the worms indeavour of revenge, the ſubtilty of the Fox, the ſagacity of the hedge-hog; the innocence and profitableneſſe of the ſheep, the laborioufneſſe of the Oxe, the obſequiouſneſſe of the Dog, the timerous ſhifts of the Hare, the nimbleneſſe of the Dear, the generoſity of the Lion, the courage of the Horſe, the fierceneſſe of the Tiger; the cheerfull muſick of Birds, the harmleſneſſe of the Dove, the true love of the Turtle, the Cocks obſervation of time, the Swallows architecture; ſhortly, (for it were eaſie here to be endleſſe) of the ſeverall qualities, and diſpoſitions of every of thoſe our fellow-creatures, with whom we converſe on the face of the earth; and who that takes notice of them, cannot fetch from every act, and motion of theirs, ſome monition

monition of duty, and occaſion of devout thoughts? Surely, I fear many of us Chriſtians, may juſtly accuſe our ſelves as too neglective of our duty this way; that having thus long ſpent our time in this great Academy of the world, we have not, by ſo many ſilent documents, learned to aſcribe more glory to our Creator; I doubt thoſe creatures, if they could exchange their brutality with our reaſon, being now ſo docible as to learn of us ſo far as their ſenſe can reach, would approve themſelves better ſcholars to us, then we have been unto them.

Withall, I muſt adde that the devout ſoul ſtands not always in need of ſuch outward monitors, but finds within it ſelf, ſufficient incitements to raiſe up it ſelf to a continuall minding of God; and makes uſe of them accordingly; and, if at any time, being taken up with importu-

nate occaſions of the world, it finds God miſſing but an hour, it chides it ſelf for ſuch negiect, and ſets it ſelf to recover him with ſo much more eager affection: as the faithfull Spouſe in the *Canticles*, when ſhe finds him whom her ſoul loved, withdrawn from her for a ſeaſon, puts her ſelf into a ſpeedy ſearch after him, and gives not over till ſhe have attained his preſence.

Cant. 5. 6.

Sect. VII.

NOw as theſe many monitors both outward and inward, muſt elevate our hearts very frequently, to God; ſo thoſe raiſed hearts muſt not entertain him with a dumb contemplation, but muſt ſpeak to him in the language of ſpirits: All occaſions therefore muſt be taken of ſending forth pious and heaven-

ly

ly ejaculations to God; The devout ſoul may doe this more then an hundred times a day, without any hinderance to his ſpeciall vocation: The Huswife at her Wheel, the Weaver at his Loom, the Husbandman at his Plough, the Artificer in his Shop, the Traveller in his way, the Merchant in his Warehouſe may thus enjoy God in his buſieſt imployment; For, the ſoul of man is a nimble ſpirit; and the language of thoughts needs not take up time; and though we now, for examples ſake, cloath them in words, yet in our practice we need not. Now theſe *Ejaculations* may be either *at large*, or *Occaſionall*: At large, ſuch as thoſe of old *Jacob*, *O Lord I have waited for thy ſalvation*; or that of *David*, *O ſave me for thy mercies ſake*: And theſe, either in matter of *Humiliation*, or of *Imploration*, or of *Thankſgiving*. In all which, we cannot follow

follow a better pattern then the ſweet ſinger of *Iſrael*, whoſe heavenly conceptions we may either borrow, or imitate.

In way of *Humiliation*, ſuch as theſe. *Heal my ſoul, O Lord, for I have ſinned againſt thee. Oh remẽber not my old ſins, but have mercy upon me.* Pſ. 41. 4. *If thou wilt be extream to mark what is done amiſſe, O Lord who may abide it? Lord thou knoweſt the thoughts of man that they are but vain; O God, why abhorreſt thou my ſoul, and hideſt thy face from me?* 79. 8. 130. 3. 94. 11.

In way of *Imploration. Up Lord, and help me O God; Oh let my heart be ſound in thy ſtatutes, that I be not aſhamed. Lord, where are thy old loving mercies? Oh deliver me, for I am helpleſſe, and my heart is wounded within me. Comfort the ſoul of thy ſervant, for unto thee, O Lord, doe I lift up my ſoul. Goe not far from me O God. O knit my heart unto thee that I may fear thy Name.* 3. 7. 89. 48. 109. 21. 86. 4. 71. 10. 86. 11.

Thou

Thou art my helper and redeemer, O Lord make no long tarrying. Pſ.70.6.
Oh be thou my help in trouble, for vain is the help of man. 60.11.
Oh guide me with thy counſell, and after that receive me to thy glory. 71.23.
My time is in thy hand, deliver me from the hands of mine enemies. 31.17.
Oh withdraw not thy mercy from me, O Lord. 40.14.
Lead me, O Lord, in thy righteouſneſſe becauſe of mine enemies. 5.8.
O let my ſoul live, and it ſhall praiſe thee. 119.primul.

In way of *Thankeſgiving*: *Oh God, Wonderfull art thou in thine holy places.* 68.35.
Oh Lord, how glorious are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep. 92.5.
Oh God, who is like unto thee! 71.17.
The Lord liveth, and bleſſed be my ſtrong helper. 18.47.
Lord, thy loving kindneſſe is better then life it ſelf. 63.4.
All thy works praiſe thee, O Lord, and thy Saints give thanks unto thee. 145.10.
Oh how manifold are thy works! in wiſedome haſt thou made them all. 104.25.
Who is God but the Lord, and who hath 18.31.

Pſ.20.5. *any ſtrength except our God? We will rejoyce in thy ſalvation, and triumph in thy Name, O Lord.*

107.8: *Oh that men would praiſe the*

31.21. *Lord for his goodneſſe. Oh how plentifull is thy goodneſſe, which thou haſt laid up for them that*

9.10. *fear thee! Thou Lord haſt never failed them that ſeek thee. In thy*

16.12. *preſence is the fulneſſe of joy, and at thy right hand there is pleaſure*

8.4. *for evermore. Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him? Not*

115.1. *unto us Lord, not unto us, but unto thy Name give the praiſe.*

Sect. VIII.

Occaſionall Ejaculations are ſuch, as are moved upon the preſence of ſome ſuch object as carries a kinde of relation or analogy to that holy thought which we have entertained. Of this nature I finde that, which was practiſed in S. *Baſils*

S. *Basil's* time; that, upon the lighting of candles, the manner was to blesse God in these words, Praise be to God the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost; which that Father says was anciently used; but who was the Authour of it he professeth to be unknown: to the same purpose was the *Lucernarium*, which was a part of the evening office of old; For which there may seem to be more colour of reason, then for the ordinary fashion of apprecation, upon occasion of our sneesing; which is expected, and practised by many, out of civility: Old and reverend *Beza* was wont to move his hat with the rest of the company, but to say withall, *Gramercy Madame la Superstition*; Now, howsoever in this, or any other practice, which may seem to carry with it a smack of superstition, our devotion may be groundless and

and unſeaſonable, yet nothing hinders but that we may take juſt and holy hints of raiſing up our hearts to our God. As when vve doe firſt look forth, and ſee the heavens over our heads, to
Pſ.19.1. think, the *Heavens declare thy glory, O God.* When we ſee the day breaking, or the Sun riſing,
74.17. *The day is thine, and the night is thine, thou haſt prepared the light and the Sun.* When the light
97.11. ſhines in our faces, *Thou deckeſt thy ſelf with light as with a gar-*
36.9. *ment*; or, *Light is ſprung up for the righteous.* When we ſee our Garden imbelliſht with flowers,
39.5. *The earth is full of the goodneſſe of the Lord.* When we ſee a
93.5. rough ſea, *The waves of the ſea rage horribly, and are mighty; but the Lord that dwelleth on high, is mightier then they.* When we ſee
139.11. the darkneſſe of the night, *The darkneſſe is no darkneſſe with thee.* When we riſe up from our bed, or our ſeat, *Lord thou knoweſt*

my

my down-ſitting, and my upriſing; thou underſtandeſt my thoughts afar off. When we waſh our hands, *Waſh thou me, O Lord, and I ſhall be whiter then ſnow.* When we are walking forth, *Oh hold thou up my goings in thy paths, that my footſteps ſlip not.* When we hear a paſſing bell: *Oh teach me to number my days, that I may apply my heart to Wiſdome:* or, *Lord, let me know my end, and the number of my days.*

Pſ. 139. 2.
51. 7.
17. 5.
90. 12.
39. 5.

Thus may we dart out our holy deſires to God, upon all occaſions; Wherein, heed muſt be taken that our Ejaculations be not, on the one ſide, ſo rare, that our hearts grow to be hard and ſtrange to God, but that they may be held on in continuall acknowledgement of him, and acquaintance with him; and, on the other ſide, that they be not ſo over-frequent in their perpetuall reiteration, as that they grow to be (like that of the

the Romiſh votaries) faſhionable; which if great care be not taken, will fall out, to the utter fruſtrating of our Devotion. Shortly, let the meaſure of theſe devout glances be, the preſerving our hearts in a conſtant tenderneſſe, and godly diſpoſition; which ſhall be further actuated upon all opportunities, by the exerciſes of our more enlarged, and fixed Devotion: Whereof there is the ſame variety that there is in Gods ſervices, about which it is converſant.

There are three main buſineſſes wherein God accounts his ſervice, here below, to conſiſt; The firſt is, our addreſſe to the throne of Grace, and the pouring out of our ſouls before him in our prayers: The ſecond is, the reading and hearing his moſt holy Word; The third is, the receit of his bleſſed Sacraments; In all which there is place and uſe for a ſetled Devotion.

SECT.

SECT. IX.

TO begin with the firſt work of our actuall, and enlarged Devotion: Some things are pre-required of us, to make us capable of the comfortable performance of ſo holy and heavenly a duty; namely, that the heart be clean firſt, and then that it be clear: clean from the defilement of any known ſin; clear from all intanglements and diſtractions: What doe we in our prayers, but converſe vvith the Almighty? and either carry our ſouls up to him, or bring him down to us? now, it is no hoping, that we can entertain God in an impure heart: Even we men loath a naſty and ſluttiſh lodging; how much more will the holy God abhorre an habitation ſpiritually filthy? I finde that even the *unclean ſpirit*

rit made that a motive of his repoſſeſſion, that he found *the houſe ſwept and garniſhed:* Satans cleanlineſſe is pollution; and his garniſhment, diſorder and wickedneſſe; without this he findes no welcome; Each ſpirit looks for an entertainment anſwerable to his nature; How much more will that God of ſpirits, who is purity it ſelf, look to be harboured in a cleanly room? *Into a malicious ſoul wiſdome ſhall not enter, nor dwell in the body that is ſubject unto ſin;* What friend would be pleaſed that we ſhould lodge him in a *Lazar-houſe?* or who would abide to have a toad lie in his boſome? Surely, it is not in the verge of created nature to yeeld any thing that can be ſo noiſome and odious to the ſenſe of man, as ſin is to that abſolute, and eſſentiall Goodneſſe: His pure eyes cannot endure the ſight of ſin; neither can he endure

Luk. 11. 25

Wiſd. 1. 4.

dure that the ſinner ſhould come within the ſight of him; *Away from me, ye wicked*, is his charge, both here, and hereafter. It is the priviledge and happineſſe of the pure in heart, that they ſhall ſee God; ſee him both in the end, and in the way; injoying the viſion of him, both in grace, and in glory: this is no object for impure eyes: Deſcend into thy ſelf therefore, and ranſack thy heart, who ever wouldſt be a true Client of Devotion; ſearch all the cloſe windings of it, with the torches of the law of God; and if there be any iniquity found lurking in the ſecret corners thereof, drag it out and abandon it; and when thou haſt done, that thy fingers may retain no pollution, ſay with the holy Pſalmiſt; *I will waſh my hands in innocence, ſo will I goe to thine Altar.* Preſume not to approach the Altar of God, there to offer the ſacrifice of thy Devotion, with

Pſal. 26. 6.

with unclean hands: Elſe thine offering ſhall be ſo far from winning an acceptance for thee, from the hands of God; as that thou ſhalt make thine offering abominable. And if a beaſt touch the Mount, it ſhall die.

Sect. X.

AS the ſoul muſt bee clean from ſin, ſo it muſt be clear and free from diſtractions. The intent of our devotion is to welcome God to our hearts; now where ſhall we entertain him, if the rooms be full thronged with cares, and turbulent paſſions? The Spirit of God will not endure to be crowded up together with the vvorld in our ſtrait lodgings; An holy vacuity muſt make way for him in our boſomes. The divine pattern of Devotion, in whom the Godhead dwelt bodily, retires

tires into the Mount to pray; he that carried heaven with him, would even thus leave the world below him. Alas, how can we hope to mount up to heaven in our thoughts, if we have the clogges of earthly cares hanging at our heels! Yea, not onely muſt there be a ſhutting out of all diſtractive cares, and paſſions, which are profeſſed enemies to our quiet converſing with God in our Devotion, but there muſt be alſo a denudation of the minde from all thoſe images of our phantaſie (how pleaſing ſoever) that may carry our thoughts aſide from thoſe better objects: We are like to fooliſh children, who when they ſhould be ſtedfaſtly looking on their books, are apt to gaze after every butterfly, that paſſeth by them; here muſt be therefore a carefull intention of our thoughts, a reſtraint from all vain, and idle rovings, and an holding

holding our ſelves cloſe to our divine task: Whiles *Martha* is troubled about many things, her devouter ſiſter, having choſen the better part, plies the one thing neceſſary, which ſhall never be taken from her; and whiles *Martha* would feaſt Chriſt with bodily fare, ſhe is feaſted of Chriſt with heavenly delicacies.

Sect. XI.

After the heart is thus cleanſed, and thus cleared, it muſt be in the next place decked with true humility, the cheapeſt, yet beſt ornament of the ſoul. If the wiſe man tel us, *that pride is the beginning of ſin*; ſurely, all gracious diſpoſitions muſt begin in humility. The foundation of all high and ſtately buildings muſt be laid low: They are the lowly valleys that ſoak in the ſhowers of heaven, which the ſteep hils ſhelve

Eccleſ. 10.

ſhelve off, and prove dry and fruitleſſe. *To that man will I look* (ſaith God) *that is poor, and of a contrite ſpirit, and trembleth at my Word:* Hence it is, that the more eminent any man is in grace, the more he is dejected in the ſight of God; The father of the faithfull comes to God under the ſtyle of *duſt and aſhes: David* under the ſtyle of *a worm and no man: Agur* the ſon of *Jakeh*, under the title of *more brutiſh then any man; and one that hath not the underſtanding of a man:* John Baptiſt, *as not worthy to carry the ſhooes of Chriſt after him*; Paul, *as the leaſt of Saints, and chief of ſinners:* On the contrary, the more vile any man is in his own eies, and the more dejected in the ſight of God, the higher he is exalted in Gods favour: Like as the Conduict-water, by how much lower it fals, the higher it riſeth. When therefore we would appear before God, in our ſolemn

Eſa. 66. 2.

Gen. 18. 27.

Pro. 30. 2.

Mat. 3. 11.

Epheſ. 3. 1.

lemn devotions, we must see that we empty our selves of all proud conceits, and find our hearts fully convinced of our own vileness, yea nothingness in his sight. Down, down with all our high thoughts; fall we low before our great and holy God; not to the earth only, but to the very brim of hell, in the conscience of our own guiltiness; for though the miserable wretchedness of our nature may be a sufficient cause of our humiliation, yet the consideration of our detestable sinfulnes is that which will depresse us lowest in the sight of God.

Sect. XII.

IT is fit the exercise of our Devotion should begin in an humble confession of our unworthiness. Now for the effectuall furtherance of this our self-dejection

jection, it wil be requiſite to bend our eyes upon a threefold object; To look inward into our ſelves, upward to heaven, downwards to hell. Firſt, to turn our eyes into our boſomes, and to take a view (not without a ſecret ſelf-loathing) of that world of corruption that hath lyen hidden there; and thereupon to accuſe, arraign, and condemn our ſelves before that awfull Tribunall of the Judge of heaven, and earth; both of that originall pollution, which wee have drawn from the tainted loyns of our firſt parents; and thoſe innumerable actuall wickedneſſes derived there-from; which have ſtayned our perſons and lives. How can we be but throughly humbled, to ſee our ſouls utterly overſpread with the odious and abominable leproſie of ſin: We finde that *Vzziah* bore up ſtoutly a while, againſt the Prieſts of the Lord, in

in the maintenance of his ſacrilegious preſumption, but when he ſaw himſelf turn'd *Lazar*, on the ſuddain, he is confounded in himſelf, and in a depth of ſhame haſtens away from the preſence of God to a ſad, and penitentiall retiredneſſe. Wee ſhould need no other arguments to loath our ſelves, then the ſight of our own faces, ſo miſerably deformed with the naſty and hatefull ſcurfe of our iniquity: Neither onely muſt we be content to ſhame, and grieve our eyes with the foule nature and condition of our ſins, but we muſt repreſent them to our ſelves in all the circumſtances that may aggravate their hainouſneſſe. Alas, Lord, any one ſin is able to damn a ſoul; I have committed many, yea numberleſſe: they have not poſſeſſed me ſingle, but, as that evill ſpirit ſaid, their name is Legion; neither have I committed theſe

ſins

ſins once, but often; Thine Angels (that were) ſinned but once, and are damned for ever; I have frequently reiterated the ſame offences, where then (were it not for thy mercy) ſhall I appear? neither have I only done them in the time of my ignorance, but ſince I received ſufficient illumination from thee; It is not in the dark that I have ſtumbled, and faln, but in the midſt of the clear light and ſun-ſhine of thy Goſpel, and in the very face of thee my God; neither have theſe been the ſlips of my weakneſſe, but the bold miſcarriages of my preſumption; neither have I offended out of inconſideration, and inadvertency, but after and againſt the checks of a remurmuring conſcience; after ſo many gracious warnings, and fatherly admonitions, after ſo many fearfull examples of thy judgements, after ſo infinite obligations of thy favors.

And thus having look't inward into our ſelves, and taken an impartiall view of our owne vileneſſe, it will be requiſite to caſt our eyes upward unto heaven, and there to ſee againſt whom we have offended; even againſt an infinite Majeſty, and power, an infinite mercy, an infinite juſtice; That power and Majeſty which hath ſpread out the heavens as a Curtain, and hath laid the foundations of the earth ſo ſure that it cannot be moved; who hath ſhut up the ſea with bars and doors, and ſaid, Hitherto ſhalt thou come and no further, and here ſhalt thou ſtay thy proud waves; who doth whatſoever he will in heaven and in earth; who commandeth the Devils to their chains, able therefore to take infinite vengeance on ſinners. That mercy of God the Father, who gave his own Son out of his boſome for our redemption; That mercy of

Job 38.

God

God the Son, who, thinking it no robbery to be equall unto God, for our ſakes made himſelf of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a ſervant; and being found in faſhion as a man, humbled himſelf, and became obedient to the death, even the accurſed death of the croſſe; That mercy of God the holy Ghoſt, who hath made that Chriſt mine, and hath ſealed to my ſoul the benefit of that bleſſed redemption; Laſtly, that juſtice of God, which as it is infinitely diſpleaſed with every ſin, ſo will be ſure to take infinite vengeance on every impenitent ſinner.

Phil. 2. 6, 7, 8, &c.

And from hence it will be fit and ſeaſonable for the devout ſoul, to look downward into that horrible pit of eternal confuſion; & there to ſee the dreadfull, unſpeakable, unimaginable torments of the damned; to repreſent unto it ſelf the terrors of

thoſe everlaſting burnings; the fire and brimſtone of that infernal Tophet; the mercileſs and unweariable tyranny of thoſe helliſh executioners; the ſhrieks, and howlings, and gnaſhings of the tormented; the unpitiable, interminable, unmitigable tortures of thoſe ever-dying, and yet never-dying ſouls. By all which, we ſhall juſtly affright our ſelves into a deep ſenſe of the dangerous and wofull condition wherein we lye in the ſtate of nature and impenitence, and ſhall be driven with an holy eagerneſſe to ſeek for Chriſt, the Son of the ever-living God, our bleſſed Mediatour; in and by whom onely, we can look for the remiſſion of all theſe our ſins, a reconcilement with this moſt powerfull, mercifull, juſt God, and a deliverance of our ſouls from the hand of the nethermoſt hell.

SECT.

Sect. XIII.

IT ſhall not now need, or boot to bid the ſoul which is truly apprehenſive of all theſe, to ſue importunately to the Lord of life for a freedome, and reſcue from theſe infinite pains of eternall death, to which our ſins have forfaited it; and for a preſent happy recovery of that favour, which is better then life. Have we heard, or can we imagine ſome hainous Malefactor, that hath received the ſentence of death, and is now bound hand, and foot, ready to be caſt into a den of Lyons, or a burning furnace, with what ſtrong cryes, and paſſionate obſecrations he plies the Judge for mercy? we may then conceive ſome little image of the vehement ſuit, and ſtrong cryes of a ſoul truly ſenſible of the danger of Gods wrath deſer-

ved by his ſin, and the dreadfu
conſequents of deſerved imm
nent damnation; Although wh
proportion is there betwixt
weak creature, and the Almigh
ty; betwixt a moment, and ete
nity?

Hereupon therefore followe
a vehement longing (uncapabl
of a denyall) after Chriſt; an
fervent aſpirations to that Sav
our, by whom only we receive
full and gracious deliveranc
from death and hell; and a fu
pardon and remiſſion of all o
ſins; and, if this come not th
ſooner, ſtrong knockings at th
gates of heaven, even ſo lou
that the Father of mercies can
not but heare and open: Neve
did any contrite ſoul beg of God
that was not prevented by hi
mercy; much more doth he con
deſcend when he is ſtrongly in
treated; our very intreaties ar
from him, he puts into us thoſ
deſires which he graciouſly an
ſwers.

ſwers ; now therefore doth the devout ſoul ſee the God of all comfort to bow the heavens, and come down with healing in his wings; and heare him ſpeak peace unto the heart thus thoroughly humbled ; Feare not, thou ſhalt not dye but live. Be of good cheer, thy ſins are forgiven thee. Here therefore comes in that divine grace of Faith, effectually apprehending Chriſt the Saviour, and his infinite ſatisfaction and merits ; comfortably applying all the ſweet promiſes of the Goſpell ; clinging cloſe to that all-ſufficient Redeemer ; and in his moſt perfect obedience emboldning it ſelf, to challenge a freedome of acceſſe to God, and confidence of appearance before the Tribunall of heaven ; and now the ſoul clad with Chriſts righteouſneſſe, dares look God in the face, and can both challenge and triumph over all the powers of darkneſſe : For, *being*

Rom. 5. 1. *justified by faith, we have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Sect. XIV.

BY how much deeper the sense of our misery and danger is, so much more welcome and joyfull is the apprehension of our deliverance; and so much more thankfull is our acknowledgement of that unspeakable mercy: The soul therefore that is truly sensible of this wonderfull goodnesse of it's God; as it feeles a marvellous joy in it self, so it cannot but break forth into cheerfull and holy (though secret) gratulations: Ps. 103. 8. *The Lord is full of compassion, and mercy, long suffering, and of great goodnesse; he keepeth not his anger for ever; he hath not dealt with me after my* Ps. 116. 12, 13. *sins, nor rewarded me after mine iniquities: What shall I render unto*

to the Lord for all his benefits towards me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the Name of the Lord. I will thank thee, for thou hast heard me, and hast not given me over to death, but art become my salvation. O speak good of the Lord all ye works of his; Praise thou the Lord, O my soul.

Ps. 119. 18. 21, &c.

Sect. XV.

THe more feelingly the soul apprehends, and the more thankfully it digests the favours of God in it's pardon, and deliverance, the more freely doth the God of mercy impart himself to it; and the more God imparts himself to it, the more it loves him, and the more heavenly acquaintance and entireness grows betwixt God, and it; and now that love which was but a spark at first, grows into a flame, and wholly takes

up the ſoul. This fire of heavenly love in the devout ſoul, is, and muſt be heightned more and more, by the addition of the holy incentives of divine thoughts, concerning the means of our freedome & deliverance. And here, offers it ſelf to us that bottomleſſe abyſſe of mercy in our Redemption, wrought by the eternall Son of God, Jeſus Chriſt the juſt, by whoſe ſtripes we are healed; by whoſe bloud we are ranſomed; where none will befit us but admiring and adoring notions. We ſhall not diſparage you, O ye bleſſed Angels, and Archangels of heaven, if we ſhall ſay, ye are not able to look into the bottome of this divine love, wherewith God ſo loved the world that he gave his onely begotten Son, that whoſoever beleeveth in him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life: None, oh, none can comprehend this mercy, but he

he that wrought it. Lord! what a tranſcendent, what an infinite love is this? what an object was this for thee to love? A world of ſinners? Impotent, wretched creatures, that had deſpighted thee, that had no motive for thy favour but deformity, miſery, profeſſed enmity? It had been mercy enough in thee, that thou didſt not damn the world, but that thou ſhouldſt love it, is more then mercy. It was thy great goodneſs to forbear the acts of juſt vengeance to the ſinfull world of man, but to give unto it tokens of thy love, is a favour beyond all expreſſion: The leaſt gift from thee had been more then the world could hope for; but that thou ſhouldſt not ſtick to give thine onely begotten Son, the Son of thy love, the Son of thine eſſence, thy coequall, coeternall Son, who was more then ten thouſand worlds, to redeem this one forlorn

lorn world of ſinners, is love above all comprehenſion of men and Angels. What diminution had it been to thee and thine eſſentiall glory, O thou great God of heaven, that the ſouls that ſinned ſhould have died and periſhed everlaſtingly? yet ſo infinite was thy loving mercy, that thou wouldeſt rather give thy onely Son out of thy boſome, then that there ſhould not be a redemption for beleevers.

Yet, O God, hadſt thou ſent down thy Son to this lower region of earth, upon ſuch terms, as that he might have brought down heaven with him, that he might have come in the port and Majeſty of a God, cloathed with celeſtiall glory, to have dazeled our eyes, and to have drawn all hearts unto him; this might have ſeemed, in ſome meaſure, to have ſorted with his divine magnificence; But thou wouldſt have him to appear in the wretched condition

condition of our humanity: Yet, even thus, hadſt thou ſent him into the world, in the higheſt eſtate, and pomp of royalty, that earth could afford, that all the Kings and Monarchs of the world ſhould have been commanded to follow his train, and to glitter in his Court; and that the knees of all the Potentates of the earth ſhould have bowed to his Soveraign Majeſty, and their lips have kiſſed his duſt, this might have carried ſome kind of appearance of a ſtate next to divine greatneſſe; but thou wouldſt have him come in the deſpiſed form of a ſervant: And thou, O bleſſed Jeſu, waſt accordingly willing, for our ſakes, to ſubmit thy ſelf to nakedneſſe, hunger, thirſt, wearineſſe, temptation, contempt, betraying, agonies, ſcorn, buffeting, ſcourgings, diſtention, crucifixion, death: O love above meaſure, without example, beyond

yond admiration! Greater love (thou ſaieſt) hath no man, then this, that a man lay down his life for his friends; But, oh, what is it then, that thou, who wert God and man, ſhouldſt lay down thy life, (more precious then many worlds) for thine enemies! Yet, had it been but the laying down of a life, in a fair and gentle way, there might have been ſome mitigatiõ of the ſorrow of a diſſolution; there is not more difference betwixt life and death, then there may be betwixt ſome one kind of death, and another; Thine, O dear Saviour, was the painfull, ſhameful, curſed death of the croſſe; wherein yet, all that man could doe unto thee was nothing to that inward torment, which in our ſtead, thou enduredſt from thy Fathers wrath; when in the bitterneſſe of thine anguiſhed ſoul, thou cryedſt out, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?*

me? Even thus, thus waſt thou content to be forſaken, that we wretched ſinners might be received to mercy; O love ſtronger then death, which thou vanquiſhedſt! more high, then that hell is deep, from which thou haſt reſcued us!

Sect. XVI.

THe ſenſe of this infinite love of God cannot chooſe but raviſh the ſoul, and cauſe it to goe out of it ſelf, into that Saviour who hath wrought ſo mercifully for it; ſo as it may be nothing in it ſelf, but what it hath, or is, may be Chriſts. By the ſweet powers therefore of Faith and Love the ſoul findes it ſelf united unto Chriſt, feelingly, effectually, indiviſibly: ſo as that it is not to be diſtinguiſhed betwixt the acts of both: *To me to live is Chriſt*, ſaith the bleſſed Apoſtle; Phil. 1. 21.

Apoſtle; and elſewhere, *I live, yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me, and the life which now I live in the fleſh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himſelfe for me*; *My beloved is mine, and I am his*, ſaith the Spouſe of Chriſt in her Bridall ſong. O bleſſed union, next to the hypoſtaticall, whereby the humane nature of the Son of God is taken into the participation of the eternall Godhead.

Gal. 2. 20.

Cant. 2. 16.

Sect. XVII.

OUt of the ſenſe of this happy union ariſeth an unſpeakable complacency and delight of the ſoul in that God and Saviour, who is thus inſeparably ours, and by whoſe union we are bleſſed; and an high appreciation of him above all the world; and a contemptuous under-valuation of all earthly things, in compariſon

riſon of him; And this is no other then an heavenly reflection of that ſweet contentment, which the God of mercies takes in the faithfull ſoul; *Thou haſt raviſht my heart, my ſiſter, my Spouſe, thou haſt raviſht my heart with one of mine eyes. Thou art beautifull, O my Love,* as Tirzah, *comely as Jeruſalem; Turne away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me. How fair is thy love, my ſiſter, my Spouſe? How much better is thy love then wine, and the ſmell of thine ointments better then all ſpices.* And the ſoul anſwers him again in the ſame language of ſpirituall dearneſſe; *My beloved is white and ruddy; the chiefeſt among ten thouſand. Set me as a ſeal upon thine heart, as a ſeal upon thine arm, for love is as ſtrong as death:* And as in an ecſtaticall qualm of paſſionate affection; *Stay me with flaggons, and comfort me with apples, for I am ſick of love.*

Cant. 4.9. 6. 4,5.

Can. 5.10. 8. 6. 2. 5.

SECT.

Sect. XVIII.

VPon this gracious complacency will follow an absolute self-resignation, or giving up our selves to the hands of that good God, whose we are, & who is ours; and an humble contentednesse with his good pleasure in all things; looking upon God with the same face, whether he smile upon us in his favours, or chastise us with his loving corrections; If he speak good unto us; *Behold the servant of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word*; If evill, *It is the Lord, let him doe whatsoever he will*: Here is therefore a cheerfull acquiescence in God; and an hearty reliance, and casting our selves upon the mercy of so bountifull a God; who having given us his Son, can in and with him deny us nothing.

Sect.

Sect. XIX.

Vpon this ſubacted diſpoſition of heart wil follow a familiar (yet awfull) compellation of God; and an emptying of our ſoules before him in all our neceſſities. For that God, who is infinitly mercifull, yet will not have his favours otherwiſe conveighed to us then by our ſupplications: the ſtyle of his dear ones is, His people that prayeth, and his own ſtyle is, The God that heareth prayers: To him therfore doth the devout heart pour out all his requeſts with all true humility, with all fervour of ſpirit, as knowing, that God will hear neither proud prayers, nor heartleſſe: wherein his holy deſires are regulated by a juſt method; Firſt, ſuing for ſpirituall favours, as moſt worthy; then for temporall, as the appendences of better; and in both, aymıng at the glory

glory of our good God, more then our own advantage : And in the order of ſpirituall things, firſt and moſt for thoſe that are moſt neceſſary, and eſſentiall for our ſouls health, then for ſecondary graces. that concern the proſperity and comfort of our ſpirituall life : Abſolutely craving thoſe graces that accompany ſalvation, all others, conditionally, and with reference to the good pleaſure of the munificent Giver ; Wherein, heed muſt be taken, that our thoughts be not ſo much taken up with our expreſſions, as with our deſires; and that we doe not ſuffer our ſelves to languiſh into an unfeeling length , and repetition of our ſuits: Even the hands of a *Moſes*, may in time grow heavy ; ſo therefore muſt we husband our ſpirituall ſtrength, that our devotion may not flagge with overtyring, but may be moſt vigorous at the laſt. And as we muſt enter into

into our prayers, not without preparatory elevations, ſo muſt we be carefull to take a meet leave of God, at their ſhutting up: following our ſupplications, with the pauſe of a faithfull, and moſt lowly adoration; and as it were ſending up our hearts into heaven, to ſee how our prayers are taken; and raiſing them to a joyfull expectation of a gracious and ſucceſſefull anſwer frō the father of mercies.

SECT. XX.

VPon the comfortable feeling of a gracious condeſcent, follows an happy fruition of God in all his favours; ſo as we have not them ſo much, as God in them; which advanceth their worth a thouſand fold, and as it were brings down heaven unto us; whereas, therefore, the ſenſuall man reſts onely in the meer

meer uſe of any bleſſing, as health, peace, proſperity, knowledge, and reacheth no higher; the devout ſoul, in, and through all theſe, ſees, and feels a God that ſanctifies them to him, and enjoys therein his favour, that is better then life; Even we men are wont, out of our good nature, to eſteem a benefit, not ſo much for its own worth, as for the love, and reſpect of the giver: Small legacies for this cauſe finde dear acceptation; how much more is it ſo betwixt God and the devout ſoul? It is the ſweet apprehenſion of this love that makes all his gifts, bleſſings. Doe we not ſee ſome vain churl, though cryed down by the multitude, herein ſecretly applauding himſelf, that he hath bags at home? how much more ſhall the godly man finde comfort againſt all the croſſes of the world, that he is poſſeſſed of him that poſſeſſeth all things; even God

God Al-ſufficient; the pledges of whoſe infinite love he feels in all the whole courſe of Gods dealing with him.

Sect. XXI.

OUt of the true ſenſe of this inward fruition of God, the devout ſoul breaks forth into cheerfull thankſgivings to the God of all comfort, praiſing him for every evill that it is free from; for every good thing it enjoyeth: For; as it keeps a juſt Inventory of all Gods favours, ſo it often ſpreads them thankfully before him, and layes them forth (ſo near as it may) in the full dimenſions; that ſo, God may be no loſer by him in any act of his beneficence. Here therefore every of Gods benefits muſt come into account; whether eternall, or temporall, ſpirituall or bodily, outward or inward

inward, publique or private, poſitive or privative, paſt or preſent, upon our ſelves or others. In all which, he ſhall humbly acknowledge both Gods free mercy, and his own ſhamefull unworthineſſe; ſetting off the favours of his good God the more, with the foyle of his own confeſſed wretchedneſſe, and unanſwerableneſſe to the leaſt of his mercies.

Now as there is infinite variety of bleſſings from the liberall hand of the Almighty, ſo there is great difference in their degrees; For, whereas there are three ſubjects of all the good we are capable of; The Eſtate, Body, Soul; and each of theſe doe far ſurpaſſe other in value, (the ſoul being infinitely more worth then the body, and the body far more precious then the outward eſtate) ſo the bleſſings that appertain to them, in ſeverall, differ in their true eſtimation

on accordingly. If either we doe not highly magnifie Gods mercy for the leaſt, or ſhall ſet as high a price upon the bleſſings that concern our eſtate, as thoſe that pertain to the body, or upon bodily favours, as upon thoſe that belong to the ſoul, we ſhall ſhew our ſelves very unworthy, and unequall partakers of the Divine bounty. But it will favour too much of earth, if we be more affected with temporall bleſſings, then with ſpirituall and eternall. By how much nearer relation then, any favour hath to the Fountain of goodneſs, and by how much more it conduceth to the glory of God, and ours in him; ſo much higher place ſhould it poſſeſſe in our affection and gratitude. No marvell therefore if the Devout Heart be raiſed above it ſelf and tranſported with heavenly raptures, when, with *Stephens* eyes, it beholds the Lord Jeſus ſtan-

ding at the right hand of God, fixing it ſelf upon the conſideration of the infinite Merits of his Life, Death, Reſurrection, Aſcenſion, Interceſſion, and finding it ſelf ſwallowed up in the depth of that Divine Love, from whence all mercies flow into the Soul; ſo as that it runs over with paſſionate thankfulneſſe, and is therefore deeply affected with all other his mercies, becauſe they are derived from that boundleſſe Ocean of Divine goodneſſe. Unſpeakable is the advantage that the ſoul raiſes to it ſelf by this continuall exerciſe of thankſgiving; for the grateſull acknowledgement of favours, is the way to more; even amongſt men (whoſe hands are ſhort and ſtrait) this is the means to pull on further beneficence; how much more from the God of all Conſolation, whoſe largeſt bounty diminiſheth nothing of his ſtore? And herein

herein the Devout Soul enters into its Heavenly Task; beginning upon earth those Hallelujahs, which it shall perfect above in the blessed Chore of Saints and Angels, ever praising God, and saying; *Blessing, and Glory, and Wisdome, and Thankesgiving, and Honour, and Power, and Might, be unto our God for ever and ever.* Amen.

Sect. XXII.

NOne of all the services of God can be acceptably, no not unsinfully performed without due devotion; as therefore in our prayers & thanksgivings, so in the other exercises of Divine Worship, (especially, in the reading and hearing of Gods Word, and in our receipt of the blessed Sacrament) it is so necessary, that without it, we offer to God a meer carcass of religious

duty, and profane that Sacred Name we would pretend to honour. First then, we must come to Gods Book, not without an holy Reverence, as duly considering both what and whose it is; Even no other, then the Word of the ever-living God, by which we shall once be judged. Great reason have we therefore, to make a difference betwixt it, and the writings of the holiest men, even no less then betwixt the Authours of both: God is true, yea, truth it self: and that which *David* said in his haste, S. *Paul* says in full deliberation, *Every man is a Lyer*. Before we put our hand to this Sacred Volume, it will be requisite to elevate our hearts to that God whose it is, for both his leave and his blessing: *Open mine eyes*, saith the sweet Singer of Israel, *that I may behold the wondrous things of thy Law*. Lo, *Davids* eyes were open before to other

Ps. 116. Rom. 3.4.

Ps. 119.8.

other objects; but when he comes to Gods Book, he can see nothing, without a new act of apertion: Letters he might see, but Wonders he could not see, till God did unclose his eyes, and enlighten them. It is not therefore for us, presumptuously to break in upon God, and to think by our naturall abilities to wrest open the precious Caskets of the Almighty; and to fetch out al his hidden treasure thence, at pleasure; but we must come tremblingly before him, and in all humility crave his gracious admission. I confesse I finde some kinde of envy in my self, when I reade of those scrupulous observances of high respects given by the Jews to the Book of Gods Law: and when I reade of a Romish Saint, that never read the Scripture but upon his knees, and compare it with the careless neglect whereof I can accuse my self, and perhaps some

Carolus Borromæus

others: Not that we would rest in the formality of outward Ceremonies of reverence, wherein it were more easie to be superstitious then devout; but that our outward deportment may testifie, and answer the awefull disposition of our hearts: whereto we shall not need to be excited, if we be throughly perswaded of the Divine Originall, and authority of that Sacred Word. It was motive enough to the *Ephesians* zealously to plead for, and religiously to adore the Image of their *Diana*, that it was *the Image that fell down from Jupiter.* Acts 19.35 Beleeve we, and know, that the Scripture is inspired by God; and we can entertain it with no other then an awefull addresse, and we cannot be Christians if we doe not so beleeve.

Every clause therefore of that God-inspired Volume, must be, as reverently received by us, so seriously weighed, and carefully laid

laid up; as knowing, that there is no tittle therein without his use. What we reade, we must labour to understand; what we cannot understand, we must admire silently, and modestly inquire of. There are plain Truths, and there are deep Mysteries. The bounty of God hath left this Well of Living-water open for all: what runnes over is for all commers; but every one hath not wherewith to draw. There is no Christian that may not enjoy Gods Book, but every Christian may not interpret it; those shallow Fords that are in it, may be waded by every Passenger, but there are deeps wherein he that cannot swim, may drown. *How can I without a Guide?* said that Ethiopian Eunuch: Wherefore serves the tongue of the Learned, but to direct the Ignorant? Their modesty is of no less use then the others skill. It is a wofull condition of a Church when no

man will bee ignorant.

What ſervice can our eyes do us in the ways of God without our thoughts ? our diligent and frequent reading, therefore, muſt be attended with our holy meditation: we feed on what we read, but we digeſt only what we meditate of: What is in our Bible, is Gods; but that which is in our hearts, is our own: By all which our care muſt be, not ſo much to become vviſer, as to become better, labouring ſtill to reduce all things to godly practice.

Finally, as we enter into this task with the lifting up of our hearts for a bleſſing, ſo we ſhut it up in the ejaculations of our thankſgiving to that God, who hath bleſſed us with the free uſe of his Word.

SECT.

SECT. XXIII.

OUr eye is our beſt guide to God our Creator, but our ear is it that leads us to God our Redeemer. *How ſhall they beleeve except they hear?* Which that we may effectually doe, our devotion ſuggeſts unto us ſome duties before the act, ſome in the act, ſome after the act.

It is the Apoſtles charge, that we ſhould be ſwift to hear, but heed muſt be taken, that we make not more haſte then good ſpeed: we may not be ſo forward as not to *look to our foot* when we goe to the Houſe of God, leſt if we be too ready to hear, we offer *the ſacrifice of Fools.* What are the feet of the ſoul, but our affections? If theſe be not ſet right, we may eaſily ſtumble, and wrench at Gods threſhold. Raſh actions can ne- Eccleſ. 5. 1.

ver hope to proſper; as therefore to every great Work, ſo to this, there is a due preparation required; and this muſt be done by meditation firſt, then by praier. Our meditation firſt ſequeſters the heart from the world, and ſhakes off thoſe diſtractive thoughts, which may carry us away from theſe better things: for what room is there for God, where the world hath taken up the lodging? *We cannot ſerve God and Mammon.* Then ſecondly, it ſeizes upon the heart for God, fixing our thoughts upon the great buſineſſe we go about; recalling the greatneſſe of that Majeſty into whoſe preſence we enter, and the main importance of the ſervice we are undertaking; and examining our intentions wherewith we addreſſe our ſelves to the work intended; I am now going to Gods Houſe; Wherefore doe I goe thither? Is it to ſee, or to be ſeen? Is it

to

to satisfie my own curiosity in hearing what the Preacher will say? Is it to satisfie the law, that requires my presence? Is it to please others eyes, or to avoid their censures? is it for fashion? is it for recreation? or is it with a sincere desire to doe my soul good, in gaining more knowledge, in quickning my affections? Is it in a desire to approve my self to my God, in the conscience of my humble obedience to his command, and my holy attendance upon his Ordinance? And where we finde our ends amisse, chiding and rectifying our obliquities; where just and right, prosecuting them towards a further perfection.

Which that it may be done, our meditation must be seconded by our prayers. It is an unholy rudenesse to press into the presence of that God whom we have not invoked: Our prayer must be, that God would yet more

more prepare us for the work, and ſanctifie us to it, and bleſs us in it; that he would remove our ſinnes, that he would ſend down his Spirit into our hearts, which may inable us to this great ſervice; that he would bleſs the Preacher in the delivery of his ſacred meſsage, that he would be pleaſed to direct his meſſengers tongue to the meeting with our neceſſities; that he would free our hearts from all prejudices and diſtractions; that he would keep off all temptations, which might hinder the good entertainment, and ſucceſs of his bleſsed Word: Finally, that he would make us truly teachable, and his ordinance the power of God to our ſalvation.

In the act of hearing, Devotion cals us to *Reverence*, *Attention*, *Application*. *Reverence* to that great God, who ſpeaks to us, by the mouth of a weak man; for,

for, in what is ſpoken from Gods Chair, agreeable to the Scriptures, the ſound is mans, the ſubſtance of the meſſage is Gods. Even an *Eglon*, when he hears of a meſſage from God, riſeth out of his ſeat. It was not Saint *Pauls* condition onely, but of all his faithfull ſervants, to whom he hath committed the word of reconciliation; *They are Ambaſſadours for Chriſt; as if God did beſeech us by them, they pray us in Chriſts ſtead to be reconciled to God:* The Ambaſſy is not the bearers, but the kings; and if we doe not acknowledge the great King of heaven in the voice of the Goſpel, we cannot but incur a contempt. Jud. 3. 20. 2 Cor. 5. 20

When therefore we ſee Gods meſſenger in his Pulpit, our eye looks at him, as if it ſaid with *Cornelius, We are all here preſent before God to hear all things that are commanded thee of God*; whence cannot but follow together Act. 10. 33

gether with an awfull disposition of mind, a reverent deportment of the body; which admits not a wild and roving eye, a drouzy head, a chatting tongue, a rude and indecent posture; but composes it self to such a site as may befit a pious soul in so religious an imployment. Neither do we come as authorized Judges to sit upon the preacher, but as humble Disciples to sit at his feet.

Sect. XXIV.

Reverence cannot but draw on Attention; We need not be bidden to hang on the lips of him whom we honour. It is the charge of the Spirit, *Let him that hath an ear hear*; Every one hath not an eare, and of those that have an ear, every one heareth not; The soul hath an ear as well as the body; if both these ears doe not meet together in one act, there is no hearing: Com-

mon

mon experience tels us that when the mind is otherwiſe taken up, we doe no more hear what a man ſays, then if we had been deaf, or he ſilent. Hence is that firſt requeſt of *Abigail* to *David*; *Let thine handmaid ſpeak to thine ears, and hear the words of thine handmaid*; and *Job* ſo importunately urgeth his friends: *Hear diligently my ſpeech and my declaration with your ears.* The outward ear may be open, and the inward ſhut; if way be not made through both, we are deaf to ſpirituall things. *Mine ear haſt thou boared*, or *digged*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt; the vulgar reads it, *my ears haſt thou perfected:* Surely our ears are grown up with fleſh; there is no paſſage for a perfit hearing of the voyce of God, till he have made it by a ſpirituall perforation.

1 Sam. 25. 24.

Job 13.17.

Pſal. 40.6.

And now that the ear is made capable of good counſell, it doth as gladly receive it; taking in every

very good leſſon, and longing for the next: Like unto the dry and chopped earth, which ſoaks in every ſilver drop, that falls from the clouds, and thirſteth for more, not ſuffering any of that precious liquor to fall beſide it.

Sect. XXV.

NEither doth the devout man care to ſatisfie his curioſity, as hearing only that he might hear; but reducts all things to a ſaving uſe; bringing all he hears, home to his heart, by a ſelf-reflecting application; like a practiſer of the art of memory, referring every thing to it's proper place; If it be matter of comfort, There is for my ſick bed, There is for my outward loſſes, There for my drouping under afflictions, There for the ſenſe of my ſpirituall deſertions; If matter

ter of doctrine, There is for my ſettlement in ſuch a truth, There for the conviction of ſuch an error, There for my direction in ſuch a practice; If matter of reproof, he doth not point at his neighbour, but deeply chargeth himſelf; This meets with my dead-heartedneſſe and ſecurity, This with my worldlymindedneſſe, This with my ſelf-love and flattery of mine own eſtate, This with my uncharitable cenſoriouſneſſe, This with my fooliſh pride of heart, This with my hypocriſie, This with my neglect of Gods ſervices, and my duty; Thus in all the variety of the holy paſſages of the Sermon, the devout mind is taken up with digeſting what it heares; and working it ſelf to a ſecret improvement of all the good counſell that is delivered, neither is ever more buſie, then when it ſits ſtill at the feet of Chriſt. I cannot therefore approve the practice (which

(which yet I see commonly received) of those, who think it no small argument of their Devotion, to spend their time of hearing, in writing large notes frō the mouth of the Preacher; which however it may be an help for memory in the future, yet cannot (as I conceive) but be some prejudice to our present edification; neither can the brain get so much hereby, as the heart loseth. If it be said, that by this means, an opportunity is given for a full rumination of wholesome Doctrines afterwards: I yeeld it, but withall, I must say that our after-thoughts can never doe the work so effectually, as when the lively voice sounds in our ears, and beats upon our heart; but herein I submit my opinion to better judgments.

SECT.

Sect. XXVI.

THe food that is received into the ſoul by the ear, is afterwards chewed in the mouth thereof by memory, concocted in the ſtomach by meditation, and diſperſed into the parts by conference and practice; True Devotion findes the greateſt part of the work behinde; It was a juſt anſwer that *John Gerſon* reports, given by a Frenchman, who being askt by one of his neighbours if the Sermon were done; no ſaith he, it is ſaid, but it is not done, neither will be, I fear, in haſt. What are we the better if we hear and remember not? if we be ſuch auditours as the Jews were wont to call ſieves, that retain no moiſture that is poured into them? What the better if we remember, but think not ſeriouſly of what we hear; or if we practice

Serm. ad Eccleſ. cautelam.

ctice not carefully what wee think of? Not that which we hear is our own, but that which we carry away: although all memories are not alike, one receives more easily, another retains longer; It is not for every one to hope to attain to that ability, that he can goe away with the whole fabrick of a Sermon, and readily recount it unto others; neither doth God require that of any man, which he hath not given him; Our desires and endeavours may not be wanting wher our powers fail; It will be enough for weak memories if they can so lay up those wholesom counsels which they receive, as that they may fetch them forth when they have occasion to use them; and that what they want in the extent of memory, they supply in the care of their practice; Indeed that is it, wherein lies the life of all religious duties, and without which

which they are but idle formalities; that which the Philoſopher ſaid of all vertue, I muſt ſay of true godlineſs, that it conſiſts in action; Our Saviour did not ſay, *Bleſſed are ye if ye know theſe things*; But, *If ye know theſe things, bleſſed are ye if ye doe them.* The end of our deſire of the ſincere milk of the Goſpel, is, that we may *grow thereby* in the ſtature of all Grace, unto the *fulneſſe of God.* 1 Pet. 2. 2 Eph. 3. 9.

SECT. XXVII.

THe higheſt of all Gods ſervices are his Sacraments; which therefore require the moſt eminent acts of our Devotion. The Sacrament of initiation, which in the firſt planting of a Church is adminiſtred onely to thoſe of riper age and underſtanding, cals for all poſſible reverence, and religious addreſſes of

of the receivers; wherein the Primitive times were punctually obſervant, both for ſubſtance, and ceremony; now, in a ſetled and perpetuated Church, in which the vertue of the Covenant deſcends from the parent to the child, there ſeems to be no uſe of our preparatory directions: Onely, it is fit that our Devotion ſhould call our eyes back, to what we have done in our infancy, and whereto we are ever obliged; that our full age may carefully endeavour to make our word good, and may put us in mind of our ſinfull failings. That other Sacrament of our ſpirituall nouriſhment, which our Saviour (as his farewell) left us for a bleſſed memoriall of his death and paſſion, can never be celebrated with enough Devotion. Farre be it from us to come to this feaſt of our God, in our common garments; the ſoul muſt be trimmed up,

up, if we would be meet gueſts for the Almighty. The great Maſter of the feaſt will neither abide us to come naked, nor ill clad: Away therefore, firſt with the old beaſtly rags of our wonted corruptions: Due examination comes in firſt, and throughly ſearches the ſoul, and findes out all the ſecret naſtineſs, and defilements that it hides within it; and by the aid of true penitence, ſtrips it of all thoſe loathſome clouts, wherewith it was polluted; Sin may not be cloathed upon with grace; *Joſhuahs* filthy garments muſt be pluckt off, ere he can be capable of precious robes: Here may be no place for our ſinfull luſts, for our covetous deſires, for our naturall infidelity, for our malicious purpoſes, for any of our unhallowed thoughts; The ſoul clearly deveſted of theſe and all other known corruptions, muſt in the next place in ſtead thereof, be furni- Zachar. 3.

furniſhed with ſuch graces and holy prediſpoſitions, as may fit it for ſo heavenly a work. Amongſt the graces requiſite, Faith juſtly challengeth the firſt place, as that which is both moſt eminent, and moſt neceſſarily preſuppoſed to the profitable receit of this Sacrament; for whereas the main end of this bleſſed banquet is the ſtrengthening of our faith, how ſhould that receive ſtrength, which hath not beeing? to deliver theſe ſacred viands to an unbeleever, is to put meat into the mouth of a dead man: Now therefore muſt the heart raiſe up it ſelf to new acts of beleeving, and muſt lay faſter hold on Chriſt, and bring him cloſer to the ſoul; more ſtrongly applying to it ſelf, the infinite merits of his moſt perfect obedience, and of his bitter death and paſſion; and erecting it ſelf to a deſire and expectation of a more vigorous, and lively

lively apprehenſion of it's omnipotent Redeemer. Neither can this faith be either dead, or ſolitary; but is ſtill really operative, and attended (as with other graces, ſo) eſpecially with a ſerious repentance; whoſe wonderfull power is, to undoe our former ſins, and to mold the heart and life to a better obedience: A grace ſo neceſſary, that the want of it (as in extream corruption of the ſtomach) turns the wholeſom food of the ſoul into poyſon; An impenitent man therefore comming to Gods board, is ſo far from benefiting himſelf, as that he eats his own judgement: Stand off from this holy table, all ye that have not made your peace with your God; or that harbour any known ſin in your boſome; not to eat is uncomfortable, but to eat in ſuch a ſtate is deadly; yet reſt not in this plea, that ye cannot come becauſe ye

are unreconciled; but (as ye love your ſouls) be reconciled that you may come.

Another Grace neceſſarily pre-required is charity to our brethren, and readineſſe to forgive; For this is a communion, as with Chriſt the head, ſo with all the members of his myſticall body: This is the true Love-feaſt of God our Saviour, wherein we profeſſe our ſelves inſeparably united both to him & his; If there be more hearts then one at Gods table, he will not own them; Theſe holy elements give us an Embleme of our ſelves: This bread is made up of many grains, incorporated into one maſſe; and this wine is the confluent juice of many cluſters; neither doe we partake of ſeverall loaves, or variety of liquors, but all eat of one bread, and drink of one cup. Here is then no place for rancour and malice; none for ſecret

cret grudgings and heart-burnings; *Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the Altar, and there remembreſt that thy brother hath ought againſt thee, leave there thy gift, and goe thy way; firſt be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.* Mat. 5. 23.

Neither may we doe as thoſe two emulous Commanders of *Greece* did, who reſolved to leave their ſpight behinde them at mount *Athos*, and to take it up again in their return; here muſt be an abſolute, and free acquitting of all the back-reckonings of our unkindneſſe, that we may receive the God of peace into a clear boſome.

SECT. XXVIII.

BEſides theſe graces there are certain holy pre-diſpoſitions ſo neceſſary that without them our ſouls can never hope to receive

ceive true comfort in this bleſſed Sacrament; whereof the firſt is an hungring and thirſting deſire after theſe gracious means of our ſalvation: What good will our meat doe us without an appetite? ſurely without it, there is no expectation of either reliſh, or digeſtion; as therefore thoſe that are invited to ſome great feaſt, care firſt to feed their hunger ere they feed their body; labouring by exerciſe to get a ſtomach, ere they employ it; ſo it concerns us to do here: and, as thoſe thoſe that are liſtleſſe, and weak ſtomached, are wont to whet their appetite with ſharp ſawces, ſo muſt we by the tart applications of the law, quicken our deſires of our Saviour here exhibited.

Could we but ſee our ſins, and our miſeries by ſin; Could we ſee God frowning, and hell gaping wide to ſwallow us, we ſhould not need to be bidden to long

long for our deliverer; and every pledge of his favour would be precious to us.

Upon the apprehenſion of our need of a Saviour and ſo happy a ſupply thereof preſented unto us, muſt needs follow a renued act of true thankfulneſſe of heart to our good God, that hath both given us his dear Son to work our redemption, and his bleſſed Sacrament to ſeal up unto us our redemption thus wrought and purchaſed; And with ſouls thus thankfully elevated unto God, we approach with all reverence, to that heavenly table, where God is both the Feaſt-maſter, and the Feaſt. What intention of holy thoughts, what fervour of ſpirit, what depth of Devotion muſt we now finde in our ſelves? Doubtleſſe, out of heaven no object can be ſo worthy to take up our hearts. What a clear repreſentation is here of the great

work of our Redemption? How is my Saviour by all my ſenſes here brought home to my ſoul? How is his paſſion lively acted before mine eyes? For lo, my bodily eye doth not more truly ſee bread and wine, then the eye of my faith ſees the body and bloud of my dear Redeemer; Thus was his ſacred body torn and broken; Thus was his precious bloud poured out for me; My ſins (wretched man that I am) helped thus to crucifie my Saviour; and for the diſcharge of my ſins would he be thus crucified: Neither did he onely give himſelf for me, upon the croſſe, but lo, he both offers and gives himſelf to me in this his bleſſed inſtitution; what had his generall gift been without this application? now my hand doth not more ſenſibly take, nor my mouth more really eat this bread, then my ſoul doth ſpiritually receive, and feed on the bread

bread of life; O Saviour, thou art the living bread that came down from heaven; Thy fleſh is meat indeed, and thy bloud is drink indeed: Oh that I may ſo eat of this bread, that I may live for ever; He that commeth to thee, ſhall never hunger, he that beleeveth in thee, ſhall never thirſt: Oh that I could now ſo hunger, and ſo thirſt for thee, that my ſoul could be for ever ſatisfied with thee; Thy people of old, were fed with Manna in the wilderneſſe, yet they died; that food of Angels could not keep them from periſhing; but oh, for the hidden Manna, which giveth life to the world, even thy bleſſed ſelf, give me ever of this bread, and my ſoul ſhall not die but live: Oh the precious juice of the fruit of the Vine, wherewith thou refreſheſt my ſoul! Is this the bloud of the grape? Is it not rather thy bloud of the New teſtament, that

is poured out for me? Thou ſpeakeſt, O Saviour, of new wine that thou wouldeſt drink with thy Diſciples, in thy Fathers kingdome, can there be any more precious and pleaſant, then this, wherewith thou cheareſt the beleeving ſoul? our palate is now dull and earthly, which ſhall then be exquiſite and celeſtiall; but ſurely no liquor can be of equall price or ſoveraignty with thy bloud; Oh how unſavoury are all earthly delicacies to this heavenly draught! O God, let not the ſweet taſte of this ſpirituall Nectar ever goe out of the mouth of my ſoul; Let the comfortable warmth of this bleſſed Cordiall ever work upon my ſoul, even till, and in, the laſt moment of my diſſolution. Doeſt thou bid me, O Saviour, doe this in remembrance of thee? Oh, how can I forget thee? How can I enough celebrate thee for this thy

thy unſpeakable mercy? Can I ſee thee thus crucified before my eies,& for my ſake thus crucified, and not remember thee? Can I finde my ſins acceſſary to this thy death, and thy death meritoriouſly expiating all theſe my grievous ſins, and not remember thee? Can I hear thee freely offering thy ſelf to me, and feel thee graciouſly conveighing thy ſelf into my ſoul, and not remember thee? I doe remember thee O Saviour; but oh that I could yet more effectually remember thee; with all the paſſionate affections of a ſoul ſick of thy love; with all zealous deſires to glorifie thee, with all fervent longings after thee, and thy ſalvation; I remember thee in thy ſufferings, Oh doe thou remember me in thy glory.

Sect. XXIX.

HAving thus busied it self with holy thoughts in the time of the celebration, the devout soul breaks not off in an abrupt unmannerlinesse, without taking leave of the great Master of this heavenly feast, but with a secret adoration, humbly blesseth God for so great a mercy, and heartily resolves and desires to walk worthy of the Lord Jesus, whom it hath received, and to consecrate it self wholly to the service of him that hath so dearly bought it, and hath given it these pledges of it's eternall union with him.

The devout soul hath thus sup't in heaven, and returnes home, yet the work is not thus done: after the elements are out of eye and use, there remains a digestion of this celestial food, by holy meditation; and now

now it thinks, Oh what a bleſſing have I received to day! no leſſe then my Lord Jeſus, with all his merits; and in and with him, the aſſurance of the remiſſion of all my ſins, and everlaſting ſalvation: How happy am I, if I be not wanting to God and my ſelf? How unworthy ſhall I be, if I doe not ſtrive to anſwer this love of my God and Saviour, in all hearty affection, and in all holy obedience?

And now after this heavenly repaſt, how doe I feel my ſelf? what ſtrength, what advantage hath my faith gotten? how much am I neerer to heaven then before? how much faſter hold have I taken of my bleſſed Redeemer? how much more firm & ſenſible is my intereſt in him?

Neither are theſe thoughts, & this examination the work of the next inſtant onely, but they are ſuch, as muſt dwell upon the heart; and muſt often ſolicite our

our memory, and excite our practiſe, that by this means we may frequently renue the efficacy of this bleſſed *Sacrament*, and our ſouls may batten more and more, with this ſpirituall nouriſhment, and may be fed up to eternall life.

Sect. XXX.

THeſe are the generalities of our Devotion, which are of common uſe to all Chriſtians; There are beſides theſe certain ſpecialties of it, appliable to ſeverall occaſions, times, places, perſons; For there are morning, and evening Devotions; Devotions proper to our board, to our cloſet, to our bed, to Gods day, to our own; to health, to ſickneſſe, to ſeverall callings, to recreations; to the way, to the field, to the Church, to our home, to the ſtudent, to the ſouldier, to the

the Magiſtrate, to the Miniſter, to the husband, wife, child, ſervant; to our own perſons, to our families; The ſeveralties whereof, as they are ſcarce finite for number, ſo are moſt fit to be left to the judgement; and holy managing of every Chriſtian; neither is it to be imagined, that any ſoul which is taught of God, and hath any acquaintance with heaven, can be to ſeek in the particular application of common rules to his own neceſſity or expedience.

The reſult of all, is,

A devout man is he that ever ſees the inviſible, and ever trembleth before that God he ſees; that walks ever, here on earth, with the God of heaven; and ſtill adores that Majeſty with whom he converſes; that confers hourely with the God of ſpirits in his own language; yet ſo, as no familiarity can abate of his aw, nor fear abate ought of his

his love. To whom the gates of heaven are ever open, that he may goe in at pleaſure to the throne of grace, and none of the Angelicall ſpirits can offer to challenge him of too much boldneſſe: Whoſe eies are well acquainted with thoſe heavenly guardians, the preſence of whom he doth as truly acknowledge, as if they were his ſenſible companions. He is well known of the King of glory, for a daily ſuitor in the Court of heaven, & none ſo welcome there, as he: He accounts all his time loſt that fals beſide his God; and can be no more weary of good thoughts, then of happineſſe.

His boſome is no harbour for any known evill; and it is a queſtion whether he more abhorres ſin, or hell; His care is to entertain God in a clear, and free heart, and therefore he thruſts the world out of doors, and humbly beſeeches God to welcome

come himſelf to his own: He is truly dejected, and vile in his own eies: Nothing but hell is lower then he; every of his ſlips are hainous, every treſpaſſe is aggravated to rebellion; The glory and favours of God heighten his humiliation; He hath lookt down to the bottomles deep, & ſeen with horror what he deſerved to feel everlaſtingly; His crys have been as ſtrong, as his fears juſt; & he hath found mercy more ready to reſcue him, then he could be importunate: His hand could not be ſo ſoon put forth as his Saviours, for deliverance. The ſenſe of this mercy hath raiſed him to an unſpeakable joy to a moſt fervent love of ſo dear a Redeemer; that love hath knit his heart to ſo meritorious a deliverer, and wrought a bleſſed union betwixt God and his ſoul. That union can no more be ſevered from an infinite delight, then that delight can be ſevered from

from an humble, and cheerfull acquieſcence in his munificent God; And now, as in an heavenly freedome, he pours out his ſoul into the boſome of the Almighty, in all faithfull ſuits for himſelf and others; ſo, he enjoys God in the bleſſings received, and returns all zealous praiſes to the giver.

He comes reverently to the Oracles of God, and brings not his eye, but his heart with him; not careleſly negligent in ſeeking to know the revealed will of his maker, nor too buſily inquiſitive into his deep counſels; not too remiſſe in the letter, nor too peremptory in the ſenſe: gladly comprehending what he may, and admiring what he cannot comprehend. Doth God call for his ear? He goes awfully into the holy preſence and ſo hears, as if he ſhould now hear his laſt: Latching every word that drops from the Preachers lips,

lips, ere it fall to the ground, and laying it up carefully where he may be ſure to fetch it. He ſits not to cenſure, but to learn, yet ſpeculation and knowledge is the leaſt drift of his labour; Nothing is his own but what he practiſeth. Is he invited to Gods feaſt? he hates to come in a foul and ſlovenly dreſſ; but trims up his ſoul, ſo, as may be fit for an heavenly gueſt: Neither doth he leave his ſtomach at home cloyed with the world, but brings a ſharp appetite with him; and ſo feeds as if he meant to live for ever. All earthly delicates are unſavoury to him, in reſpect of that celeſtiall Manna: Shortly, he ſo eats and drinks, as one that ſees himſelf ſet at Table with God, and his Angels; and riſes and departs full of his Saviour; and in the ſtrength of that meal walks vigorouſly and cheerfully on towards his glory. Finally, as he well knows that he

he lives, and moves, and hath his beeing in God, ſo he referres his life, motions, and beeing wholly to God; ſo acting all things as if God did them by him, ſo uſing all things, as one that enjoyes God in them; and in the mean time ſo walking on earth, that he doth in a ſort carry his heaven with him.

The

THE FREE PRISONER:

OR,

The Comfort of RESTRAINT.

Written
Some while since
in the Tower,

BY
J. H. B. N.

The Free Prisoner:

OR

The Comfort of Restraint.

SECT. I.

SIR:

WHiles you pity my affliction, take heed lest you aggravate it, and in your thoughts make it greater then it is in my own; It is true, I am under restraint; What is that to a man, that can be free in the Tower, and cannot but be a prisoner abroad? Such is my condition, and every Divine Philosophers with me. Were my walls much straiter then they are, they cannot hold me in; It is a bold word to say,

I cannot, I will not be a priſoner: It is my *Soul* that is *I:* my fleſh is my partner, (if not my ſervant) not my ſelf: However my body may be immured, that agile ſpirit ſhall flye abroad, and viſit both earth, and heaven at pleaſure. Who ſhall hinder it from mounting up (in an inſtant) to that ſupream region of bliſſe, and from ſeeing that, by the eye of faith, which S. *Paul* ſaw in extaſie; and when it hath viewed that bleſſed *Hierarchy* of heaven to glance down through the innumerable, and unmeaſurable globes of light (which move in the firmament, and below it) into this elementary world; and there to compaſſe ſeas and lands, without ſhipwrack, in a trice, which a *Drake*, or *Cavendiſh* cannot doe, but with danger, and in ſome years navigation; And if my thoughts liſt to ſtay themſelves in the paſſage; with what variety can my ſoul be taken up

of

of ſeverall objects; Here, turning in to the dark vaults, and dungeons of penall reſtraint, to viſit the diſconſolate priſoners, and to fetch from their greater miſery, a juſt mitigation of mine own; There, looking in to the houſes of vain jollity, and pitying that which the ſenſuall fools call happineſſe; Here ſtepping in to the Courts of great Princes, and in them obſerving the fawning compliances of ſome, the trecherous underworking of others; hollow friendſhips, faithleſſe ingagements, fair faces, ſmooth tongues, rich ſuits, viewing all ſave their hearts, & cenſuring nothing that it ſees not; There calling in at the low cottages of the poor, and out of their empty cupboard furniſhing it ſelf with thankfulneſſe; Here ſo over-looking the Courts of Juſtice, as not willing to ſeer igour or partiality; There liſting what they ſay in thoſe meetings which

which would paſſe for ſacred, and wondring at what it hears. Thus can, and ſhall, and doth my nimble ſpirit beſtir it ſelf in a reſtleſs flight, making onely the Empyreall heaven, the bounds of it's motion; not being more able to ſtand ſtill, then the heavens themſelves, whence it deſcended: Should the iron enter into my ſoul, as it did into that good Patriarchs, yet it cannot fetter me: No more can my ſpirit be confined to one place, then my body can be diffuſed to many. Perhaps therefore you are miſtaken in my condition; for what is it I beſeech you that makes a priſoner? Is it an allotment to the ſame room without change, without remove? What is that ſtill to a minde that is free?

And why is my body then more a priſoner then the beſt mans ſoul; that, you know, is peremptorily aſſigned, for inhabitaiton

habitation to this houſe of clay till the day of diſſolution: Why more then the ſtarres of Heaven, which have remained fixed in their firſt ſtations ever ſince they were firſt created? Why more then thoſe great perſons which keep up for ſtate; or Dames for beauty? Why more then thoſe Anachorites whom we have ſeen willingly coop'd up for merit? How much more ſcope have we then they? We breathe freſh aire, we ſee the ſame heavens with the freeſt travellers.

Sect. II.

BUt we have (you will ſay) bounds for our reſtraint, which the free ſpirit hates; as never being pleaſed, but with a full liberty both of proſpect and paſſage; Any barre, whether to the foot, or to the eye, is a death: Oh vain affectation of wilde, and

roving curioſity! if their deſires cannot be bounded, yet their motions muſt; When they have the full ſight of heaven above them, they cannot clime up into it; they cannot poſſibly ſee that whole glorious contignation; and when the whole earth lyes open before them, they can meaſure but ſome ſmall pieces of it. How can they be quiet till they have purchaſed *Tycho Brahe* his proſpective Trunk of thirty two foot long, whereby they may diſcover a better face of Heaven; ſome leſſer Planets moving round about the Sun, and the Moonets about Saturn and Jupiter, and the Mountains, Seas, and Vallies in the Moon? How can they reſt till having acquainted themſelves with the conſtellations of our Hemiſphere, they have paſſed the Equinoctiall, and ſeen the triangle, the croſſe, and the clouds, and the reſt of the unknown Stars that move above the

the other Pole? And when all this is done they are but who they were, no whit better, no whit wiſer, and perhaps far leſſe happy then thoſe, who never ſmelt any but their own ſmoke; never knew any ſtar, but Charles-wayn, the Morning-ſtar, and the Seven. For me, I doe not envie, but wonder at the licentious freedome, which theſe men think themſelves happy to enjoy; and hold it a weakneſſe in thoſe mindes, which cannot finde more advantage and pleaſure in confinement, and retiredneſſe; Is it a ſmall benefit, that I am placed there, where no oathes, no blaſphemies beat my ears? where my eyes are in no perill of wounding objects; where I hear no invectives, no falſe doctrines, no ſermocinations of Ironmongers, Felt-makers, Coblers, Broom-men, Groomes, or any other of thoſe inſpired ignorants; no curſes,

no ribaldries: where I ſee no drunken comeſſations, no rebellious routs, no violent oppreſſions, no obſcene rejoycings, nor ought elſe that might either vex, or affright my ſoul. This, this is my liberty: who whiles I ſit here quietly lock'd up by my Keeper, can pity the turmoiles and diſtempers abroad, and bleſſe my own immunity from thoſe too common evils.

Sect. III.

IS it the neceſſity and force of the reſtraint; ſince thoſe things which we do voluntarily, are wont to paſſe from us with delight, which being impoſed ſeem grievous to us? Why ſhould not I have ſo much power over my will as to make that voluntary in me, to undergo, which another wils forcibly to inflict? the mind that is truly ſubacted

to

to Grace, can ſo frame it ſelf to what it muſt ſuffer, as that it finds a kind of contentment in patience; Thus we daily doe to the Almighty, whoſe will, by our humble ſubmiſſion, we make ours; and pray that we may do ſo: And who can reſtrain us without him? If therefore my wiſe and holy God think it beſt to cage me up, by the cõmand of authority (upon what cauſe ſoever) why ſhould not I think this encloſure a better liberty: who know there is perfect freedome in his obedience? So then, if conſtraint make a priſoner, I am none; who am moſt willingly, where my God will have me: And, if my will did not often carry me out of my own walks at home, why cannot it as well confine me to a larger compaſſe of the Tower?

SECT. IV.

IS it solitude and infrequence of visitation? This may perhaps be troublesome to a man that knows not to entertain himself; but, to him that can hold continuall discourse with his own heart, no favour can be greater; For of all other, these self-conferences are most beneficiall to the soul; Other mens communication may spend the time with more advantage of learning or mirth; but none can yeeld us so much spiritual profit, as our own soliloquies: And when all is done, the Greeks said well; It is not much, but usefull that makes truly wise. Besides this, we can never have the opportunity of so good company, as when we are alone: Now, we enjoy the society of God, and his Angels, which we cannot so freely do in a throng of visitants: When

ὁ χρήσιμ', οὐκ ὁ πόλλ' εἴδως σοφὸς.

When God would expreſſe his greateſt intireneſſe with his Church, *Ducam eam in ſolitudinem*, ſaith he: *I will bring her into the wilderneſſe, and there ſpeak comfortably to her.* We cannot expect ſo ſweet converſation with God, in the preſence of others, as apart. Oh the divine benefit of an holy ſolitarineſſe, which no worldly heart can either know, or value! What care I for ſeeing of men, when I may ſee him that is inviſible? What care I for chatting with friends, when I may talk familiarly with the God of heaven? What care I for entertaining mortall gueſts, when I may with *Abraham* & his nephew *Lot* feaſt the Angels of God: and (which were too great a word, if God himſelf had not ſpoken it) be attended by them? Hoſ. 2. 14.

Sect. V.

IS it the reproach & ignominy that commonly attends the very name of an impriſonment? weak mindes may be affected with every thing: but, with ſolid judgements, it is not the puniſhment, but the cauſe that makes either the Martyr, or the malefactor. S. *Pauls* bonds were famous: and *Petrus ad vincula* is not without a note of yearly celebrity: and it were hard, if ſo many bleſſed Martyrs, and Confeſſors, who have lived, & dy'd in Jayls, for the truths ſake, ſhould not have brought priſons (ſuch as they may be) into ſome credit. Shortly, as notorious crimes may be at liberty, ſo even innocence may be under reſtraint; yet thoſe crimes no whit the better, nor this innocence the worſe.

Beſides (that which perhaps came

came not within your freer thoughts) every reſtraint is not for puniſhment; there is a reſtraint for ſafety, a *ſalva cuſtodia*, as well as *arcta*, ſuch is this of ours: This ſtrong Tower ſerves not ſo much for our priſon, as for our defence; what horror ſoever the name may carry in it: I bleſſe God for theſe wals, out of which I know not where we could (for the time) have been ſafe from the rage of the miſincenſed multitude: Poor ſeduced ſouls, they were taught it was piety to be cruell; and were miſperſwaded to hate & condemn us for that, (which ſhould have procured their reverence, and honour) even that holy ſtation which we hold in Gods Church; and to curſe thoſe of us, who had deſerved nothing but their thanks and prayers: raying on our very profeſſion in the ſtreets; and rejoycing in our ſuppoſed ruine: Father, forgive

them, for they knew not what they did: Here we were out of the danger of this miſ-raiſed fury, and had leiſure to pray for the quenching of thoſe wilde fires of contention, and cauſleſſe malice, which (to our great grief) we ſaw wicked incendiaries daily to caſt amongſt Gods dear & well-minded people. Here we have well and happily approved with the bleſſed Apoſtle, that (what ever our reſtraint be) the Word of God is not bound; With what liberty, with what zeal, with what ſucceſſe hath that been preached by us to all commers? Let them ſay, whether the Tower had ever ſo many, ſuch gueſts, or ſuch benedictions; ſo as if the place have rendered us ſafe, we have endeavoured to make it happy; Wherin our performances have ſeemed to confute that which * *Cornelius* Biſhop of *Rome* long ſince obſerved, that the mind laden vvith

* *Non enim poteſt mens attrita & oneribus & importunitatibus gravata, tantum boni perage-re, quantum delectata & oppreſſionibus ſoluta* Cornel. ep. 2. Rufo Coepiſcopo.

with heavy burdens of affliction, is not able to doe that ſervice, which it can doe when it is free and at eaſe; Our troubles through Gods mercy made us more active, and our labours more effectuall.

Sect. VI.

ADde unto theſe (if you pleaſe) the eminent dignity of the place, ſuch, as is able to give a kinde of honour to captivity, the ancient ſeat of Kings, choſen by them, as for the ſafe reſidence of their royall perſons, ſo for their treaſury, their wardrobe, their Magazine; all theſe precious things are under the ſame cuſtody with our ſelves; ſent hither, not as to a priſon, but a repoſitory; and why ſhould we think our ſelves in any other condition? How many worthy inhabitants make choice

choice to fixe their abode within theſe wals, as not knowing where to be happier? the place is the ſame to us, if our will maybe the ſame with theirs; they dearly purchaſe that, which coſt us nothing but our fees; nothing makes the difference, but the meer conceit of Liberty, which whiles I can give to my ſelf, in my thoughts, why am I pityed as miſerable, whiles their happineſſe is applauded?

You ſee then, how free I am in that which you miſ-call my priſon; ſee now, how little cauſe I have to affect this liberty, which you imagine me to want; ſince I ſhall be, I can be no other then a priſoner abroad: There is much difference of priſons; One is ſtrait and cloſe locked, ſo far from admitting viſitants, that it ſcarce allows the ſun to look in at thoſe croſſe-barred grates; another, is more large and ſpacious, yeelding both walks, and acceſſe;

acceſſe; Even after my diſcharge from theſe wals, I ſhall be yet ſure to be a priſoner, both theſe ways; For, what is my body but my priſon in the one? and what is the world, but my priſon in the other kinde?

Sect. VII.

TO begin with the former, never was there a more cloſe priſoner then my ſoul is for the time to my body; Cloſe in reſpect of the eſſence of that ſpirit, which ſince it's firſt Mittimus, never ſtir'd out from this ſtrait room; never can doe, till my gaole-delivery.

If you reſpect the improvement of the operatiõsof that buſie ſoul, it is any where, it is ſucceſſively every where; no place can hold it, none can limit it; but if you regard the immortall, and immateriall ſubſtance of it, it is faſt lockt

lockt up within these wals of clay, till the day of my changing come; even as the closest captive may write letters to his remotest friends, whilest his person is in durance; I have too much reason to acknowledge my native Jayle, and feel the true Symptomes of it to my pain; what darkness of sorrow have I here found? what little-ease of melancholick lodgings? what manacles and shakles of cramps? yea what racks of torturing convulsions?

And if there be others, that finde less misery in their prison, yet there is no good soul, but findes equall restraint: That spirituall substance, which is imprisoned within us, would fain be flying up to that heaven whence it descended; these wals of flesh forbid that evolation, (as *Socrates* cal'd it of old) and will not let it out, till the God of spirits (who placed it there) shall

ſhall unlock the doors, and free the priſoner by death; He that infuſed life into *Lazarus*, that he might call him from the priſon of the grave, muſt take life from us, when he cals us out of this priſon of fleſh; *I deſire to be looſed, and to be with Chriſt*, (ſaith the Apoſtle) as ſome verſions expreſſe it; whiles we are chained to this fleſh, we can have no paſſage to heaven, no free converſation with our Saviour: Although it was the ſingular priviledge of that great Doctor of the *Gentiles*, that he was in heaven before his diſſolution: whether in the body, or out of the body, he knew not: How far that rapture extended, whether to both ſoul and body, if he knew not, how ſhould we? But this we know, that ſuch extaſie and viſion was in him, without ſeparation of the ſoul from the body; which another ſhould hope for in vain: And for him, ſo

ſo he ſaw this glory of Paradiſe, that he could not yet enjoy it: Before he, or we, can be bleſſed with the fruition of Chriſt, we muſt be looſed: that is, freed from our clog, and our chain of this mortall body.

What but our priſon wals can hinder us here, from a free proſpect? What but theſe wals of fleſh can hinder me from a clear viſion of God? I muſt now, for the time, ſee as I may: Nothing can enter into my ſoul, but what paſſes through my ſenſes, and partakes, in ſome ſort, of their earthlineſſe; when I am freed from them, I ſhall ſee as I am ſeen; in an abſtracted and heavenly way; ſo as one ſpirit apprehends another: I do now, at the beſt, ſee thoſe ſpirituall objects darkly, by the eye of faith, as in a glaſſe; and that not one of the cleareſt neither: (Alas, what dim repreſentations are theſe, that I can attain to here,

of

of that Majesty, whose sight shal make me blessed ?) I shall once see as I am seen, face to face; the face of my glorified soul shall see the face of that all-glorious Deity, and in that sight be eternally happy ; It is enough for a prisoner in this dungeon of clay, to know of,and fore-expect such felicity , vvhereof these earthly gieves render him as yet uncapable.

Sect. VIII.

WOe is me ! how many prisons do we passe ? so soon as ever this divine soul is infused into this flesh, it is a prisoner: neither can any more passe out of this skin , till this frame of nature be demolished : And now,as the soul of this Embryon is instantly a prisoner to the body , so the body is also a prisoner in the womb,wherein it is formed : what darknesse,what close-

closeneſſe,what uneaſineſſe,what nuiſance is there in this dungeon of nature? There he muſt lie in an uncouth poſture, for his appointed month, till the native bonds being looſed, & the doors forced open, he ſhall be by an helpfull obſtetrication drawn forth into the larger priſon of the vvorld;there indeed he hath elbow-room enough: but al that wide ſcope cannot free him from a true incarceratiõ: Who knows not that there are many differences,and latitudes of reſtraint? A *Simeon* may impriſon and enchain himſelf in the compaſſe of a pillar, not allowing himſelf the eaſe of his whole dimenſiõs; *Peter* may be lockt up in a larger Jayle, betwixt his two Leopards(as that father terms thẽ;) S. *Paul* may be two years allowed to be a priſoner in his own hired houſe, but under the guard of his keeper, and not vvithout his chain: There are thoſe who

Acts ult.

upon

upon hainous, and dangerous occaſions, may be kept cloſe under many locks; there are priſoners at large, vvho have the liberty of the Tower; yet even theſe laſt, notwithſtanding the allowance of ſpacious walks, & freſh gardens, are no other then acknowledged priſoners: Such is my condition to the world, whē I am at my fulleſt liberty: It is true, that when I look back to the ſtraitneſſe of my firſt, and native priſon, and compare it with the large extent of that wide world, into which I am brought, I may well with *Iſaacs* Herds-men, ſay, *Rehoboth, For now, the Lord hath made me room:* but when I compare that world, wherein I am, with that whereto I aſpire, and vvhich I know to be above, and look to enjoy; I can ſee nothing here, but meer priſon-vvals, and profeſſe my life to be no other then a perpetuall durance.

Gen. 26. 22.

SECT.

Sect. IX.

Magna domus hominis.

IF *Varro* ſaid of old, that the world was no other then the great houſe of little man, I ſhall be bold to adde what kind of houſe it is; It is no other then his priſon, yea, his dungeon.

Far be it from me to diſparage the glorious work of my omnipotent Creator: I were not worthy to look upon this large, and glittering roof of heaven, nor to ſee the pleaſant varieties of theſe earthly landskips, if I did not adore that infinite power, and wiſdome which appears in this goodly, and immenſe fabricke; and confeſſe the marvellous beauty of that majeſtick, and tranſcendent workmanſhip; Rather when I ſee the *Moon and the Starres, which thou haſt ordained,* I ſay with the Pſalmiſt, *Lord what is man?*

Pſal. 8. 3, 4.

But,

But, O God, it is no diſhonour to thee, that though this be a fair houſe, yet thou haſt one ſo much better then it, as a Palace is beyond a Jayle.

This beauty may pleaſe, but that raviſheth my ſoul: Here is light, but dim, and dusky, in reſpect of that inacceſſible light, wherein thou dwelleſt: Here is a glorious ſun, that illumineth this inferiour world, but thou art the ſun who enlighteneſt that world above: Thou, to whom thy created Sun is but a ſhadow.

Here we converſe with beaſts, or at the beſt, with men; there with bleſſed ſoules, and heavenly Angels: Here ſome frivolous delights are intermixed with a thouſand vexations; There in thy preſence is the fulneſſe of joy: So then, let the ſenſuall heart miſ-place his paradiſe here in the world, it ſhall not paſſe for other with me, then my priſon: How can it? Why ſhould it?

it? for what other terms doe I find here?

What blind light looks in here at theſe ſcant loopeholes of my ſoul? Yea, what darkneſſe of ignorance rather poſſeſſes me? what bolts and ſhackles of heavy croſſes doe I beare about me? how am I fed here with the bread of affliction? how am I watched and beſet with evill ſpirits? how contumeliouſly traduced? how diſdainefully lookt upon? how dragging the ſame chaine with the worſt malefactors? how diſabled to all ſpirituall motions? how reſtrained from that full liberty of injoying my home, and my God in it, which I daily expect in my diſſolution? when therefore, I am releaſed from theſe walls, I am ſtill impriſoned in larger, and ſo ſhall be till the Lord of the ſpirits of al fleſh (who put me here) ſhal ſet me free; and all the daies of my appointed time wil I wait, til this my changing come.

Sect. X.

YOu ſee then by this time, how little reaſon I have to be too much troubled with this impriſonment, or my friends for me; But indeed, there are ſome ſorts of Priſoners, which neither you nor I can have tears enow to bewaile: and thoſe eſpecially of two kinds.

The one, thoſe that are too much affected with an outward bondage: The other, thoſe that are no whit affected with a ſpirituall.

In the firſt rank are they that ſinke under the weight of their Irons; Poore impotent ſoules, that groaning under the cruelty of a Turkiſh thraldome, or a Spaniſh Inquiſition, want Faith to beare them out, againſt the impetuous violences of their tormentors: I ſorrow for their ſuffering

fering; but for their fainting more: could they ſee the Crown of glory, which the righteous Judge holds ready for their victorious Patience, they could not but contemne paine, and all the pomp of Death, and confeſſe that their Light affliction (which is but for a moment) works for them a far more exceeding and eternall weight of glory: But alas, it is the weakneſſe of their eyes, that they onely look at the things that are ſeen, cloſe walls, heavy fetters, ſharp ſcourges, mercileſs racks, and other dreadfull engines of torture, and ſee not the things that are not ſeen, the glorious reward of their victory, bleſſednes. Had they had *Stephens* eyes, they would have emulated his martyrdome; Surely whoſoever ſhall but read the ſtory of the Mother and the ſeaven Brothers in the *Maccabees*, and that of the fourty Armenian Mar-

tyrs

tyrs frozen to death, reported by *Gaudentius*, and shall there see the fainting revolter dying uncomfortably in the Bath, whiles the other thirty and nine (together with their new converted Keeper) are crowned by an Angell from heaven, cannot choose (except he have nothing but Ice in his bosome) but find in himself a disposition emulous of their courage, and ambitious of their honour; But alas, what ever our desires; and purposes may be, it is not for every one to attain to the glory of Martyrdome; this is the highest pitch, that earthly Saints are capable of: He must be more then a man, whom pain and death cannot remove from his holy resolutions, and especially, the lingering execution of both. It is well if an age can yeeld one, *Mole*: In what terms shal I commemorate thee, O thou blessed Confessor, the great example of invincible

constancy, in these backsliding times, (if at least thy rare perseverance be not more for wonder then imitation) whom thirty yeares tedious durance in the Inquisitory at Rome, could not weary out of thy sincere profession of the Evangelical truth? All this while thou wert not allowed the speech, the sight of any, but thy persecutors: Here was none to pity thee, none to exhort thee: If either force of perswasion, or proffers of favour, or threats of extremity, could have wrought thee for thy perversion, thou hadst not at last dyed ours. Blessed be the God of all comfort, who having stood by thee, and made thee faithfull to the death, hath now given thee a crown of life and immortalitie; and left thee a noble pattern of Christian fortitude, so much more remarkable, as lesse frequently followed.

Whether I look into the former,

ner, or the present times I finde the world full of shrinking professors.

Amongst the first Christians, persecution easily discovered four sorts of cowardly Renegadoes; The first, and worst, whom they justly styled Idolaters, that yeelded to all the publike forms of worship to those false Gods: The second, Sacrificers, who condescended so far, as to some kind of immolation unto those fained deities, or, at least, to a tasting of those things which were thus offered: The third, Incensers, such as (with *Marcellinus* himself) came on so far, as to cast some grains of incense into the Idols fire: The last were their Libellaticks, such as privately by themselves, or by some allowed proxey, denyed the faith, yet with their mony bought out this ignominy, & sin of any publique Act of Idolatry.

Not to speak of those many

thousands which fell down before *Solyman* the second, and held up their finger to signifie their conversion to his Mahometisme, for ease of their taxations; how many doe we hear of daily of all nations, and some (which I shame and grieve to say) of our own, who yeild to receive circumcision, and to renounce their Saviour? Oh the lamentable condition of those distressed Christians! If constant to their profession, they live in a perpetual purgatory of torment; If revolting, they run into the danger of an everlasting damnation in hel: Even this gentle restraint puts me into the meditatiō of their insupportable durance; Why doe not all Christian hearts bleed with the sense of their deplorable estate? why is not our compassion heightned, according to the depth of their perill, and misery?

What are our bowels made of, if they yearn not at their unexpressible

expressible calamity? Ye rich Merchants, under whose imployment many of these poor souls have thus unhappily miscarried, how can you blesse your selves in your bags, whiles you see the members of Christ your Saviour, thus torn from him, for want of a petty ransome? Ye eminent persons whom God hath advanced to power and greatness, how can you sleep quietly upon your pillows, whiles you think of the cold and hard lodgings, the hungry bellies, the naked and waled backs of miserable Christians? Lastly, what fervent prayers should we all, that professe the dear name of Christ, powre out unto the God of heaven for the strengthning of the faith and patience of these afflicted souls against the assaults of violence? and for their happy and speedy deliverance out of their wofull captivity?

Sect. XI.

THese prisoners are worthy of our deep compassion; as those, who are too sensible of their own misery; Others there are, who are so much more worthy of greater pity, by how much they are lesse apprehensive of their need of it; plausible prisoners under a spirituall tyranny; whose very wils are so captived to the powers of darknes, that to choose they would be no other then bondmen; pleasing themselves in those chains, whose weight is enough to sink their souls into hell: such are they, who have yeelded themselves over to bee enthralled by any known sin; No men under heven doe so much applaud themselves in the conceit of their liberty; none so great slaves as they; If the very Stoick Philosophers had not enough evinced this

this truth, Divinity should: Indeed, the world is a worse kind of Algier, full of miserable captives; Here lies one so fettered in lust, that he rots again; there another, so laden with drunken excesse, that he can neither goe nor stand, and in very deed is not his own man: Here one so pinched with golden fetters, that he can neither eat, nor sleep; nor at all enjoy himself: there another so pined with envy, that he is forced to feed on his own heart: Here, one so tormented with anger, that he is stark mad for the time; and cares not how he mischieves himself in a furious desire to hurt others; there, another, so racked with ambition, that he is stretched beyond his own length, and lives in the pain of a perpetuall self-extention.

These, and all others of this kinde are most miserable prisoners, chained up for everlasting darknesse: So much more wor-

thy of our pity, as they are leſſe capable of their own: Spend your compaſſion (if you pleaſe) upon theſe deplorable ſubjects; But for me, wiſh me (if you wil) as free from any imputation of evill, as I was, and am from the thought of it; wiſh me in your free champian, where I may have no hedge ſo much as to confine my eye: wiſh me happy in the ſociety of ſo dear and and noble a Friend; but in the mean while, think of me no otherwiſe, then as a Free priſoner, And

Yours thankfully devoted,
in all faithfull obſervance,

J. N.

THE REMEDY OF DISCONTENTMENT.

OR, A TREATISE OF CONTENTATION in whatsoever condition: Fit for these sad and troubled Times.

By Jos. HALL D.D. and B. of N.

Phil. 4. 11. *I have learned in whatsoever estate I am, therewith to be content.*

12. *I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; Every where, and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to want.*

LONDON,
Printed by *M. F.* for *Nat. Butter.*
1646.

I Have perused this Treatise entituled [The Remedy of Discontentment,] *and judging it to be very pious, profitable, and necessary for these sad and distracted times, I license it to be printed and published, and should much commend it to the Christian Reader, if the very name of the Authour were not in it self sufficient without any further testimony.*

JOHN DOWNAME.

TO THE CHRISTIAN READER,

Grace and Peace.

WHat can be more ſeaſonable, then when all the world is ſick of Diſcontentment, to give counſels and Receits of Contentation? Perhaps the Patient will think it a time ill choſen for phyſick, in the midſt of a Fit: But in this caſe we muſt doe as we may. I confeſſe, I had rather have ſtayed till the Paroxyſme were happily over; that ſo the humors being ſomewhat ſetled, I

might hope for the more kindly operation of this wholsome medicine. But, partly my age and weaknesse, despairing to out-live the publique distemper; and partly my judgement (crossing the vulgar opinion for the season of some kinde of Receits) have now put me upon this safe, and useful prescription: God is my witness, that I wrote this in the depth of mine own afflictions, (the particulars whereof, it were unseasonable to trouble the world withall) as one that meant to make my selfe my own Patient, by enjoyning my self that course of remedies, that I prescribe to others; and, as one, who by the powerfull working of Gods Spirit within me, labour to

finde my heart framed to thoſe holy diſpoſitions which I wiſh and recommend to every Chriſtian ſoul: If there be no remedy but the worſt of outward troubles muſt afflict us; it ſhall be happy yet, if we may find inward peace in our boſomes: which ſhall be, if we can reconcile our ſelves to our offended God; and calme our ſpirits to a meek undergoing of thoſe ſufferings, which the divine Providence hath thought fit to meaſure forth unto us: This is the main drift of this enſuing labour. Now the ſame God, who hath, in theſe bluſtring times, put into my heart theſe quiet thoughts of holy Contentation, *bleſſe them in every hand that ſhall receive them; and*

make them effectuall to the good of every soul, that shall now, and hereafter entertain them; that so their gracious proficiency may, in the day of the appearance of our Lord Jesus, adde to the joy of my account; Who am the unworthiest of the servants of God, and his Church,

J. N.

The

THE CONTENTS OF the severall Sections following.

Sect. I. THe *excellency of* Contentation; *and how it is to be had.* pag. 171

§ II. *The contrariety of estates wherein it is to be exercised.* 172

§ III. *Who they are that know not how to want, and be abased.* 176

§ IV. *Who they are that know how to want.* 182

§ V. *Considerations leading to* Contentation; *and first the consideration of the ficklenesse*

of life, and of all earthly commodities; Honour, Beautie, Strength, &c. 183
§ VI. *Consideration of the unsatisfying condition of these worldly things.* 192
§ VII. *The danger of the too much estimation of these earthly comforts.* 196
§ VIII. *The consideration of the divine Providence, ordering, and over-ruling all events.* 198
§ IX. *The consideration of the worse condition of others.* 200
§ X. *The consideration of the inconveniences of great estates; & therein first their cares.* 206
§ XI. *The danger of the distempers, both bodily, and spirituall, that follow great means, and the torment in parting with them.* 211
§ XII. *Consideration of the benefits of Poverty.* 216
§ XIII. *Consideration of how little will suffice Nature.* 221
§ XIV. *Consideration of the incon-*

inconveniences and miseries of discontentment. 225
§ XV. *The gracious vicissitudes of Gods favours and afflictions.* 230
§ XVI. *Consid. of the great examples of* Contentation, *both without, and within the Church of God.* 236
§ XVII. *Contentment in death it self.* 244
§ XVIII. *The miseries and inconveniences of the continued conjunction of the soul and body.* 250
§ XIX. *Holy dispositions for contentment; the first Whereof, Humility.* 256
§ XX. 2. *Selfe-resignation.* 262
§ XXI. 3. *The true inward riches.* 268
§ XXII. *Holy resolutions: and* 1. *That the present estate is best for us.* 272
§ XXIII. 2. *Resolution to abate of our desires.* 279

§ XXIV.

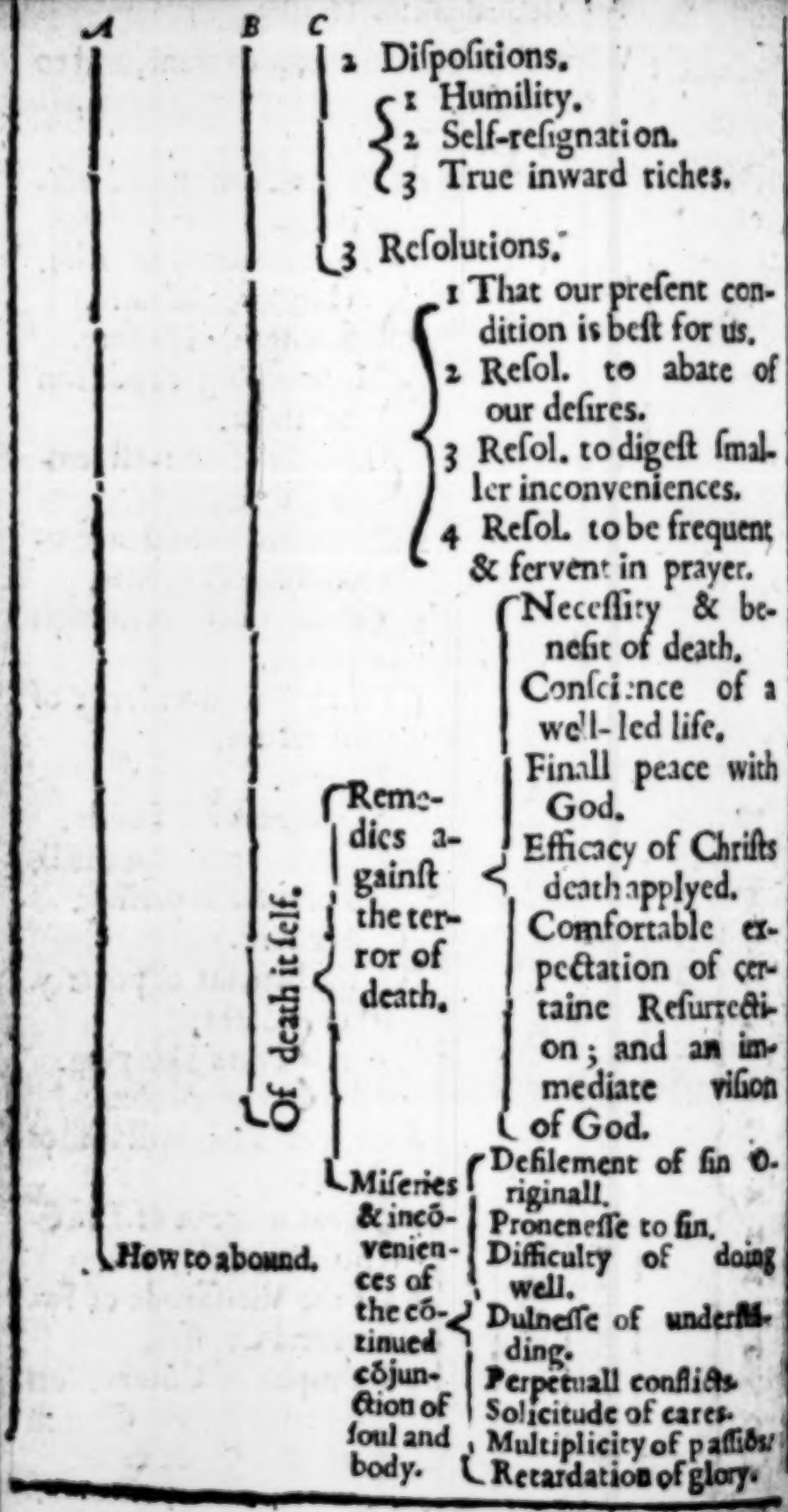
§ XXIV. 3. *Resolution, to inure our selves to digest smaller discontentments.* 284

§ XXV. 4. *Resolution, to be frequent and fervent in prayer.* 291

§ XXVI. *The difficulty of knowing how to abound; and the ill consequences of the not knowing it.* 294

THE

CONTENTATION, in knowing
- What it is to know how to want, and to be abased.
- How to want: where is set forth
  - 1 Considerations,
    - 1 Of the valuation of earthly things; the
      - Transitorines of Life, Honour, Beautie, Strength, Pleasure.
      - Unsatisfying condition of them.
      - Danger of over-esteeming them.
    - 2 Of divine providence over-ruling all events.
    - 3 Of the worse condition of others.
    - 4 Of the inconvenience of great estates.
      - Cares.
      - Danger of { bodily. / spirituall. } distemper
      - Torment in parting.
      - Account.
    - 5 Of the benefits of poverty.
      - freedom from { Cares. / Fears of losing. } keeping.
    - 6 Of how little will suffice Nature.
    - 7 Of the miseries of Discontentment.
    - 8 Of the Vicissitude of Favors and Crosses.
    - 9 Examples of Cōtentation { without / within } { the Church / of God. }
- How to be attained in respect
  - Of the adversities of life, where must be certain


A
B
C
2 Dispositions.
1 Humility.
2 Self-resignation.
3 True inward riches.
3 Resolutions.
1 That our present condition is best for us.
2 Resol. to abate of our desires.
3 Resol. to digest smaller inconveniences.
4 Resol. to be frequent & fervent in prayer.
Of death it self.
Remedies against the terror of death.
Necessity & benefit of death.
Conscience of a well-led life.
Finall peace with God.
Efficacy of Christs death applyed.
Comfortable expectation of certaine Resurrection; and an immediate vision of God.
Miseries & incōveniences of the cōtinued cōjunction of soul and body.
Defilement of sin Originall.
Proneness to sin.
Difficulty of doing well.
Dulness of understanding.
Perpetuall conflicts.
Solicitude of cares.
Multiplicity of passions.
Retardation of glory.
How to abound.

THE REMEDY OF Diſcontentment.

SECT. I.

The excellency of Contentation; *and how it is to be had.*

IF there be any happineſſe to be found upon earth, it is in that which we call *Contentation*: This is a flower that growes not in every Garden: The great Doctor of the Gentiles tels us that he had it; I have learned (ſaith hee) in what eſtate ſoever I am, therewith to be content; I know how to be abaſed, and I know how to abound: Lo, he could not have taken out this leſſon if

Phil. 4. 11.

αὐτάρκειαν. v. 12. μεμύημαι.

if he had not learn'd it; and he could not have learnt it of any other then his Maſter in Heaven: What face ſoever Philoſophy may ſet upon it, all Morality cannot reach it; neither could his learned *Gamaliel*, at whoſe feet he ſate, have put this skill into him; no, he learn'd it ſince he was a Chriſtian; and now profeſſeth it; So as it appears, there is a divine art of *Contentation* to be attained in the ſchoole of Chriſt; which whoſoeeer hath learnt, hath taken a degree in heaven, and now knowes how to be happy both in want, and abundance.

Sect. II.

The contrariety of eſtates wherein Contentation *is to be exerciſed.*

THe nature of man is extreamly querulous; wee know

know not what we would have, and when we have it, we know not how to like it: we would be happy, yet we would not dye; we would live long, yet wee would not bee old; wee would be kept in order, yet we would not be chaſtiſed with affliction; we are loath to work, yet are weary of doing nothing; we have no liſt to ſtir, yet finde long ſitting painfull; we have no minde to leave our bed, yet finde it a kinde of ſickneſſe to lie long; we would marry, but would not bee troubled with houſhold cares; when once we are maried, we wiſh we had kept ſingle; If therefore grace have ſo maſtered nature in us, as to render us content with what ever condition, we have attain'd to no ſmal meaſure of perfection

Si ſedeas requies eſt magna labor; Si multum ſedeas, labor eſt. Tert. *Car.*

Which way ſoever the winde blowes, the skilfull Mariner knows how to turn his ſailes to meet it; the contrariety of eſtates

if he had not learn'd it; and he could not have learnt it of any other then his Maſter in Heaven: What face ſoever Philoſophy may ſet upon it, all Morality cannot reach it; neither could his learned *Gamaliel*, at whoſe feet he ſate, have put this skill into him; no, he learn'd it ſince he was a Chriſtian; and now profeſſeth it; So as it appears, there is a divine art of *Contentation* to be attained in the ſchoole of Chriſt; which whoſoeeer hath learnt, hath taken a degree in heaven, and now knowes how to be happy both in want, and abundance.

Sect. II.

The contrariety of eſtates wherein Contentation *is to be exerciſed.*

THe nature of man is extreamly querulous; wee know

know not what we would have, and when we have it, we know not how to like it : we would be happy, yet we would not dye; we would live long, yet wee would not bee old; wee would be kept in order, yet we would not be chaſtiſed with affliction; we are loath to work, yet are weary of doing nothing; we have no liſt to ſtir, yet finde long ſitting painfull; we have no minde to leave our bed, yet finde it a kinde of ſickneſſe to lie long; we would marry, but would not bee troubled with houſhold cares; when once we are maried, we wiſh we had kept ſingle; If therefore grace have ſo maſtered nature in us, as to render us content with what ever condition, we have attain'd to no ſmal meaſure of perfection

Si ſedeas requies eſt magna labor; Si multum ſedeas, labor eſt. Tert. *Car.*

Which way ſoever the winde blowes, the skilfull Mariner knows how to turn his ſailes to meet it; the contrariety of eſtates

estates to which wee lie open here, gives us different occasions for the exercise of *Contentation:* I cannot blame their choice who desire a middle estate betwixt want and abundance, and to be free from those inconveniences which attend both extreames: Wise *Solomon* was of this diet; Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed mee with the food of my meet allowance; Lo, he that had all, desired rather to have but enough: and if any estate can afford contentment in this life, surely this is it, in the judgement and experience of the wisest Heathen. But forasmuch as this equall poise is hardly attainable by any man, & is more proper for our wishes, and speculation, then for our hopes, true wisdom must teach us so to compose our selves that we may be fit to entertain the discontentments, & dangers of those excesses,

Pro. 30. 8.

Senec. de Tranquil.

ſes, and effects, which we cannot but meet with in the courſe of our mortall life: And ſurely we ſhall finde that both extreams are enemies to this good temper of the ſoul: proſperity may diſcompoſe us, as well as an adverſe condition; The Sunſhine may be as troubleſome to the Traveller as the winde or rain; neither know I whether is more hard to manage of the two; a dejected eſtate, or a proſperous; whether we may be more incommodated with a reſty horſe, or with a tired one: Let us begin with that which nature is wont to think moſt difficult; that contrary to the practice of learners, we may try to take out the hardeſt leſſon firſt. Let us therefore learne in the firſt place how to want.

SECT.

SECT. III.

How many doe not know how to want.

COld we teach men how not to want, we ſhould have Diſciples enow; every man ſeeks to have, & hates to lack: could we give an Antidote againſt poverty, it would be too precious: And why can we not teach men even this leſſon too? The Lord is my ſhepherd, ſaith *David*, therefore can I lack nothing; and moſt ſweetly elſewhere, O fear the Lord ye that be his Saints; for they that fear him, lack nothing; The Lions do lack and ſuffer hunger; but they which ſeek the Lord ſhall want no manner of thing that is good: Let God be true, and every man a lyer; Certainly, if we were not wanting to God in our fear of him, in our faithfull reliance upon

Pſal. 23. 1.

Pſal. 34. 9, 10.

on him; in our conſcionable ſeeking of him, he whoſe the earth is, and the fulneſſe of it, would not ſuffer our carefull endeavours to go weeping away: But if it ſo fall out that his moſt wiſe providence findes it better for us to be held ſhort in our worldly eſtate, (as it may be the great Phyſitian ſees it moſt for our health to be kept faſting) it is no leſſe worth our learning to know how to want; For there is many an one that wants, but knows not how to want, and therefore his need makes him both offenſive and miſerable.

There are thoſe that are poor and proud; one of the wiſe mans three abominations; fooliſh *Laodiceans* that bear themſelves for rich, encreaſed with goods, and lacking nothing; when they are no other then wretched, and miſerable, and poor, and blinde, and naked; Theſe men know not how to want, their

Eccl. 25. 22.

Rev. 3. 17.

their heart is too big for their purſe; and ſurely pride, though every where odious, yet doth no where ſo ill as in rags.

There are thoſe that are poor and envious; looking with an evill eye upon the better fare of others; as ſurely this vice dwels more cõmonly in Cottages then in Palaces. How diſpleaſedly doth the begger look upon the larger almes of his neighbour? grudging to another what ever fals beſides himſelf, and miſliking his own dole, becauſe the next hath more; whoſe eye with the diſcontented Labourers is evill, becauſe his Maſter is good; Neither doe theſe men know how to want. Mat. 20. 15

There are thoſe that want diſtruſtfully; meaſuring the merciſull proviſion of the Almighty by the line of their own ſenſe; as the *Samaritan* Peer, when in the extremity of a preſent famine he heard the Prophet foretell a ſudden

ſudden plenty; Behold, if the Lord would make windows in heaven, might this thing be? 2 King.7.2

There are thoſe that want impatiently; repining at Gods dealing with them, and making their own impotent anger guilty of a further addition to their miſery; as the diſtreſſed King of *Iſrael*, in a deſperate ſenſe of that grievous dearth; Behold, this evill is of the Lord, what ſhould I wait on the Lord any longer? And thoſe wretched ones, who when the fourth Angell had poured out his phiall upon the Sunne, being ſcorched with the extremity of the heat, blaſphemed the God of heaven: In this kinde was that ſinfull techineſſe of *Jonah*: when I ſee a poor worme that hath put it ſelfe out of the coole cell of the earth wherein it was lodged, and now being beaten upon by the Sun-beames, lies wrig- 2 King.6. 33. Rev.16.9. 11.

wrigling upon the bare path, turning it ſelf every way in vain, and not finding ſo much as the ſhade of a leafe to cover it; I cannot but think of that fretting Prophet; when wanting the protection of his gourd he found himſelf ſcalded with that ſtrong reflection; and looking up wrathfully towards that Sun from whom he ſmarted, could ſay to the God that made it, I do well to be angry, even to the death. Ionah 4.9.

Laſtly, there are thoſe that are poor and diſhoneſt even out of the very ſuggeſtion of their want; It was the danger hereof that made *Agur* the ſonne of *Jakeh* pray againſt penury; Leſt I be poor, and ſteal; and (by forſwearing it) take the Name of God in vain. Prov.30.9

Sect. IV.

Who they are that know how to want.

THeſe and perhaps others do and muſt want, but in the mean time they do that which they know not how to do; there is a skill in wanting which they have not; Thoſe onely know how to want, that have learnt to frame their minde to their eſtate; like to a skilfull Muſitian, that can let down his ſtrings a peg lower when the tune requires it; Or like to ſome cunning Spagirick, that can intend or remit the heat of his furnace according to occaſion. Thoſe, who when they muſt be abaſed, can ſtoop ſubmiſſely, like to a gentle reed, which when the winde blowes ſtiffe, yeilds every way; thoſe that in an humble obeyſance can lay themſelves

ſelves low at the foot of the Almighty, and put their mouth in the duſt; that can patiently put their necks under the yoak of the Higheſt; and can ſay with the Prophet, Truly this is my ſorrow, and I muſt beare it; Thoſe that can ſmile upon their afflictions, rejoycing in tribulation, ſinging in the Gaole with *Paul* and *Silas* at midnight; Laſtly, thoſe that can improve miſery to an advantage, being the richer for their want, bettered with evils, ſtrengthened with infirmities; and can truly ſay to the Almighty, I know that of very faithfulneſſe thou haſt afflicted me; Never could they have come out ſo pure metall, if they had not paſſed under the hand of the Refiner; never had they proved ſo toward children, if they had not been beholden to the rod: Theſe are they that know how to want, & to be abaſed; and have effectually

ctually learned to be content with the meaneſt condition: to which happy temper that wee may attain, there will be uſe of, 1. Certaine Conſiderations; 2. Certain Diſpoſitions; and 3. Certain Reſolutions; Theſe three ſhall be as the grounds, and rules of this our Divine Art of *Contentation*.

SECT. V.

The Conſideration of the ficklenesſe of life, and all earthly commodities.

THE firſt Conſideration ſhall be of the juſt valuation of all theſe earthly things; which doubtleſſe is ſuch, as that the wiſe Chriſtian cannot but ſet a low price upon them, in reſpect, firſt, of their tranſitorineſſe; ſecondly, of their inſufficiency of ſatisfaction; thirdly, the danger of their fruition.

At the beſt, they are but glaſſie ſtuffe, which the finer it is, is ſo much more brittle; yea, what other then thoſe gay bubbles, which children are wont to raiſe from the mixed ſope and ſpittle of their Walnut-ſhell; vvhich ſeem to repreſent pleaſing colors, but in their flying up inſtantly vaniſh? There is no remedy; either they muſt leave us, or we muſt leave them. Well may we ſay that of the *Pſalmiſt*, which *Campian* vvas reported to have often in his mouth; My ſoul is continually in my hands; and who knows vvhether it will not expire in our next breathing? How many have ſhut their eyes in an healthfull ſleep, who have waked in another vvorld? We give too large ſcope to our account, vvhiles we reckon ſeven years for a Life; a ſhorter time will ſerve; vvhiles vve finde the revolution of Ieſſe then halfe thoſe years to have diſpatched

* five

* five *Cæsars*, and five *Popes*; nay, who can assure himself of the next moment? It is our great weakness, if we doe not look upon every day, as our last; why should we think our selves in a better condition, then the chosen vessell,* who deeply protested to dye daily? What a poor complaint was that of the great Conquerour of the Jews, *Titus Vespasian*, who putting his head out of his sick litter, querulously accused Heaven, that he must dye, and had not deserved it; when he might have found it guilt enough that he was a man; and therefore by the very sentence of nature condemned, I know not whether to live, or dye.

Indeed, what can we cast our eyes upon, that doth not put us in minde of our frailty? All our fellow-creatures dye for us, and by us: The day dyes into night; the trees and all other plants of

* *Galba*
Otho
Vitellius
Æl. Pertinax
Didius.
Anno D.
1275. }
1276. }
Gregor. 10
Innocent 5
Hadrian 5
Johan. 20
vel 21
Nicolaus 3
* 1 Cor. 15.31.

the earth ſuffer a kinde of Autumnall mortality; the face of that common Mother of us all, doth at the leaſt in Winter, reſemble Death; But if the Angel of Death (as the Jews term him) ſhall reſpite, and reprieve us for the time; alas! how eaſily may we have over-lived our comforts? If Death doe not ſnatch us away from them, how many thouſand means of caſualties, of enemies, may ſnatch them away from us? He that was the greateſt man of all the Sonnes of the Eaſt, within a few dayes became a ſpectacle and proverb of penury, which ſtill ſticks by him, and ſo ſhall doe to the worlds end, *As poor as Job.*

Gen. 15. 10

Deut. 29. 23.

The rich Plaine of *Jordan*, which over-night was as the Garden of the Lord, is in the morning covered over with brimſtone, and ſalt, and burning; Wilt thou cauſe thine eyes to

to flye upon that which is not? saith wise *Solomon*: For riches certainly make thẽselves wings, they fly away as an Eagle towards Heaven: if wee have wings of desire to fly after them, they are nimbler of flight to outstrip us, and leave us no less miserable in their losse, then wee were eager in their pursuit. Prov. 23. 5.

As for Honour, what a meer shadow it is? upon the least cloud interposed, it is gone, and leaves no mention where it was: The same Sun sees *Haman* adored in the Persian Court, like some earthly Deity; and like some base vermine waving upon his Gibbet: Doe we see the great, and glorious *Cleopatra*, shining in the pompous Majesty of *Egypt*? stay but a while, and ye shall see her in the dust, and her two children, whom shee proudly styled the Sun, and the Moon, driven like miserable Captives before the Chariot

of their Conquerour: Man being in honour abideth not, ſaith the *Pſalmiſt*, he periſheth, but his greatneſſe (as more fraile then he) is oftentimes dead and buried before him, and leaves him the ſurviving executor of his own ſhame. Pſ.49.12.

It was eaſie for the captive Prince, to obſerve in the Charet-wheel of his Victor, that when one ſpoak roſe up, another went down, and both theſe in ſo quick a motion, that it was ſcarce diſtinguiſhed by the eye.

Well therefore may we ſay of Honour, as *Ludovicus Vives* ſaid of Scholaſticall Divinity: *Cui fumus eſt pro fundamento*: It is built upon ſmoak, how can it be kept from vaniſhing? *Ludo. Vives in 3. de Civit. cenſura à notatus Velloſillo.*

As for Beauty, what is it, but a daſh of Natures tincture laid upon the skinne, which is ſoon waſht off with a little ſickneſs? what but a fair bloſſome, that drops off, ſo ſoon as the fruit offers

offers to ſucceed it? what but a flower, vvhich vvith one hot Sun gleam weltreth and fals? Hee that had the choice of a thouſand Faces, could ſay, Favour is deceitfull, and Beauty is Vanity. Prov. *ult. penult.*

Laſtly, for Strength, and vigour of Body, if it could bee maintained till our old age, alas, how ſoon is that upon us, ere we be'aware! how doth it then ſhrivell our fleſh and looſen our ſinews, and cripple our joynts! *Milo*, when he lookt upon his late brawny arms, and ſaw them now grow lanck and writhled, lets fall teares, and bewraies more weakneſſe of mind, then he had before bodily ſtrength: but how often doth ſickneſſe prevent the debilitations of age; pulling the ſtrongeſt man upon his knees, and making him confeſſe, that youth, as well as childe-hood, is Vanitie?

Eccles: 11. 10. As for Pleasure, it dies in the birth, and is not therefore worthy to come into this bill of Mortality.

Doe we then upon sad consideration see and feel the manifest transitorinesse of Life, Riches, Honour, Beautie, Strength, Pleasure, and whatever else can bee deare and precious to us in this vvorld, and can vvee dote upon them so, as to be too much dejected vvith our parting from them? Our Saviour bids us consider the Lillies of the field; Mat. 6. 28. And he that made both, tels us, that *Solomon* in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these: Surely, full well are they worth our considering. But if those Beauties could bee as permanent, as they are glorious, how vvould they carry away our hearts with them? Now, their fading condition justly abates of their

their value; Would wee not ſmile at the weakneſſe of that man, that ſhould weep and howle, for the falling of this Tulip, or that Roſe, abandoning all comfort for the loſſe of that, vvhich he knows muſt flouriſh but his moneth? It is for children to cry for the falling of their houſe of Cards, or the miſcarriage of that painted gew-gaw, vvhich the next ſhowre vvould have defaced. Wiſe Chriſtians know hovv to apprize good things according to their continuance, and can therefore ſet their hearts onely upon the inviſible Comforts of a better Life, as knowing that the things which are not ſeen, are Eternall.

SECT. VI.

Consideration of the unsatisfying condition of all worldly things.

BUt were these earthly things exempted from that fickleness, which the God of Nature hath condemned them unto, were they (the very memory whereof perisheth with their satiety) as lasting, as they are brittle, yet what comfort could they yeeld for the soul to rest in? Alas! their efficacy is too short to reach unto a true *Contentation*; yea, if the best of them were perpetuated unto us, upon the faireſt conditions, that this Earth can allow, how intolerable tedious would it prove in the fruition? Say that God were pleased to protract my life to the length of the age of the first founders of Mankinde,

Mankinde, and ſhould (in this ſtate of body) adde hundreds of years to the days of my pilgrimage: Woe is me, how vveary ſhould I be of my ſelf, and of the World? I, that now complain of the load of ſeventy one yeers, how ſhould I be tyred out, ere I could arrive at the age of *Parre*? but before I could climb up to the third Century of *Johannes de Temporibus*, hovv often ſhould I call for death, not to take up, but to take off my burthen, and with it my ſelf? But if any, or all theſe earthly bleſſings could be freed from thoſe grievances, wherewith they are commonly tempered, yet how little ſatisfaction could the ſoul finde in them? What are theſe outward things, but very luggage, which may load our backs, but cannot lighten our hearts? Great, and vviſe *Solomon*, that had the full command of them all, cries out, Vanity

nity of Vanities; and a greater Monarch then hee, ſhuts up the Scene with, I have been all things, and am never the better: All theſe are of too narrow an extent, to fill the capacious ſoul of Man; the deſires vvhereof are enlarged with enjoying, ſo as the more it hath, the leſſe it is ſatisfyed, neither indeed can it bee otherwiſe; The Eye, and the Eare, are but the Purveyours for the Heart, if therefore the eye be not ſatisfied with ſeeing, nor the ear with hearing, how ſhall the heart ſay, It is enough? Now, vvho vvould ſuffer himſelf to be too much diſquieted vvith the loſſe of that, vvhich may vex him, but cannot content him? We doe juſtly ſmile at the folly of that vain Lord, of vvhom *Petrarch* ſpeakes, who vvhen an Horſe vvhich hee dearely loved, was ſick, laid that

Eccle. 1, 8.

that Steed of his, on a ſilken bed, vvith a vvrought pillovv under his head, and cauſed himſelfe (then afflicted vvith the Gout) to be carried on his ſervants ſhoulders to viſit that dear patient; and upon his deceaſe, mourned ſolemnly for him, as if it had been his Son. We have laught at the faſhion of the Girles of *Holland*, vvho having made to themſelves gay and large Babies, and laid them in a curious cradle, fain them to ſicken and dye, and celebrate their funerall vvith much paſſion: So fond are we, if having framed to our ſelves imaginary contentments here, in the World, vve give vvay to immoderate grief in their miſcarriage.

SECT.

Sect. VII.

The danger of the love of these earthly comforts.

NEither are these earthlie comforts more defective in yeelding full satisfaction to the soul, then dangerous in their over-dear fruition: For too much delight in them, robs us of more solid contentments: The World is a cheating gamester, suffering us to win at the first, that at last he may goe away with all. Our very Table may be made our snare; and those things vvhich should have been for our vvealth, may bee unto us an occasion of falling: *Leo* the fourth Emperour of *Constantinople*, delighted extreamly in precious stones, with these he embellishes his Crown, which being worn close to his Temples, strikes such a cold into

Ps. 69.22.

to his head, that cauſeth his bane: yea, how many vvith the too much love of theſe outward things, have loſt, not their lives onely, but their ſouls? No man can be at once the Favourite of God and the World; as that Father ſaid truly: or as our Saviour in fuller tearms, No man can ſerve two Maſters, GOD and Mammon: Shortly, the World may be a dangerous enemy, a ſure friend it cannot bee.

If therefore we ſhall like wiſe men, value things at their due prices, ſince we are convinced in our ſelves, that all theſe earthly comforts are ſo tranſitory in their nature, ſo unſatisfying in their uſe, and ſo dangerous in their enjoying, hovv little reaſon have we to be too much affected with forgoing them? Our bloud is dear to us, as that wherein our life is, yet if we finde that it is either infected,

fected, or distempered, we doe willingly part with it in hope of better health: How much more, with those things, which are farther from us, and lesse concerning us?

Sect. VIII.

Consideration of the Divine Providence ordering all events.

THe second Consideration is of that All-wise Providence which ordereth all events both in Heaven and Earth, allotting to every Creature his due proportion, so over-ruling all things to the best, that we could not want, if he knew it better for us to abound: This Station he hath set us in, this measure he hath shared out to us, whose will is the rule of good; what we have therefore, cannot but be best for us. The World is a large Chesse-board, every man hath his place assigned

assigned him: one is a King, another a Knight, another a Pawn, and each hath his severall motion; vvithout this variety, there could be no game played; A skilfull Player will not stirre one of these Chips, but vvith intention of an advantage; neither should any of his men either stand, or move, if in any other part of that Checker, it might bee in more hope to win.

There is no estate in this World vvhich can be universally good for all, one mans meat may be another mans medicine, and a third mans poyson; A Turk findes health and temper in that Opium, vvhich would put one of us into our last sleep. Should the Plow-man be set to the Gentlemans fare, this Chicken, that Partridge, or Phesant, would (as over-slight food) bee too soon turned over, and leave his empty stomach to quarrell for stronger provision: Beef

is

is for his diet; and if any ſawce needs beſides his hunger, Garlick: Every man hath, as a body, ſo a minde of his own; vvhat one loves is abhorred of another; the great Houſe-keeper of the world knows how to fit every palate with that which either is, or ſhould be agreeable to it, for ſalubrity, if not for pleaſure: Lay before a Childe a Knife, and a Rod, and bid him take his choice, his hand will be ſtraight upon that edge tool, eſpecially, if it be a little guilded, and glittering; but the Parent knows the Rod to be more ſafe for him, and more beneficiall: We are ill carvers for our ſelves, he that made us, knows what is fit for us, either for time, or meaſure; without his Providence not an hair can fall from our heads; We would have bodily health, I cannot blame us; what is the vvorld to us without it? He whoſe wee

are

are, knows ſickneſſe to bee for the health of the ſoul; whether ſhould we in true judgement deſire? We vviſh to live, who can blame us? life is ſweet, but if our Maker have ordained, that nothing but Death can render us glorious, what madneſſe is it to ſtick at the condition? Oh our groſſe infidelity, if we doe not beleeve that great Arbiter of the World, infinitely wiſe to know what is beſt for us, infinitely mercifull to vvill what hee knows beſt, infinitely powerfull to doe what he will! And if we be thus perſwaded, hovv can we, but in matter of good, ſay with bleſſed *Mary*: Behold thy Servant, be it unto me according to thy Word; And in matter of evill, with good *Eli*: It is the Lord, let him doe what hee will?

SECT.

SECT. IX.

Consideration of the worse condition of others.

IN the third place, it will be requisite for us to cast our eyes upon the worse condition of others, perhaps better deserving then our selves; for if we shall whine and complain of that weight, which others do run away chearfully withall, the fault will appear to be not in the heavinesse of the load, but in the weaknesse of the bearer: If I bee discontented with a mean dwelling, another man lives merrily in a low thatched Cottage; If I dislike my plain fare, the four captive children feed fair and fat with pulse and water: If I be plundred of my rich suits, I see a more chearfull heart under a russet Coat, then great Princes have under purple Robes:

Dan. 1. 12, 13.

Robes: If I doe gently languiſh upon my ſick bed, I ſee others patient under the torments of the Colick, or Stone, or Strangury: If I be clapt up within four wals, I hear *Petronius* profeſſe, he had rather be in priſon with *Cato*, then at liberty with *Caſar*: I hear *Paul* and *Silas* ſing like Nightingales in their cages: Am I ſad, becauſe I am childleſſe? I hear many a parent wiſh himſelf ſo: Am I baniſhed from my home? I meet with many of vvhom the vvorld vvas not vvorthy, vvandring about in Sheeps-skins, in Goat-skins, in deſerts, and in mountains, and in dens, and in caves of the earth: What am I that I ſhould ſpeed better then the miſerableſt of theſe patients? What had they done, that they ſhould fare worſe then I? If I have little, others have leſſe; If I feel pain, ſome others, torture; If their ſufferings be juſt, my forbearances

Heb. 11. 13

bearances are mercifull; my proviſions, to theirs, liberall: It is no ill counſell therefore, and not a little conducing to a contented want, that great perſons ſhould ſometimes ſtep aſide into the homely Cottages of the poor, and ſee their mean ſtuffe, courſe fare, hard lodgings, worthleſſe utenſils, miſerable ſhifts; and to compare it with their own delicate and nauſeating ſuperfluities: Our great and learned King *Alfred* was the better all his life after, for his hidden retiredneſſe in a poor Neatheards Cabbin, where he was ſheltred, and ſometimes alſo chidden by that homely Dame: Neither vvas it an ill vviſh of that vviſe man, that all great Princes might firſt have had ſome little taſte, what it is to want, that ſo their own experience might render them more ſenſible of the complaints of others.

Man,

Man, though he be absolute in himself, and stand upon his own bottom, yet is he not a little wrought upon by examples, and comparisons with others; for in them he sees what he is, or may be, since no events are so confined to some speciall subjects, as that they may not bee incident to other men.

Merits are a poor plea for any mans exemption, whiles our sinfull infirmities lay us all open to the rod of divine Justice: and if these dispensations be meerly out of favour, why doe I rather grudge at a lesser misery, then blesse God for my freedome from a greater judgement? Those therefore that suffer more then I, have cause of more humbling, and I that suffer lesse then they, have cause of more thankfulnesse; even mitigations of punishment are new mercies, so as others torments doe no other then heighten

heighten my obligations; Let me not therefore repine to be favourably miserable.

Sect. X.

Consideration of the inconveniences of great estates: and first of their cares, that they expose us to envy, and then macerate us with cares.

THe fourth Consideration shall be of the inconveniences which doe oftentimes attend a fulnesse of estate; such, and so many as may vvell make us sit down content with a little; whereof, let the first be envy: a mischief not to be avoided of the great; This shadow follows that body inseparably; All the curs in the street are ready to fall upon that dogge that goes away with the bone; and every man hath a Cudgell to fling at a well-loaded Tree; whereas

whereas a mean condition is no eye-ſore to any beholder; Low ſhrubs are not wont to bee ſtricken with Lightning, but tall Oaks and Cedars feel their flames; Whiles *David* kept his fathers ſheep at home, he might ſing ſweetly to his Harp in the fields, without any diſturbance: But when he once comes to the Court, and findes applauſe, and greatneſſe creep upon him, now emulation, deſpight and malice, dog him cloſe at the heels whereſoever he goes: Let him leave the Court, and flee into the Wilderneſſe, there theſe bloud-hounds follow him in hot ſuit; Let him run into the Land of the *Philiſtims*, there they finde him out, and chaſe him to *Ziklag*; and if at the laſt, he hath climbed up to his juſt Throne, and there hopes to breath him after his tedious purſuit, even there he meets vvith more unquietneſſe then in his deſert, and

Pſ.132.1. notwithſtanding all his Royalty, at laſt cries out, Lord remember *David*, and all his troubles: How many have wee known, whom their wealth hath betraid, and made innocent malefactors? who might have ſlept ſecurely upon a hard bolſter, and in a poor eſtate out-lived both their Judges, and accuſers. Beſides, on even ground a fall may be harmleſſe; but he that fals from on high, cannot eſcape bruiſing: He therefore that can think the benefits of Eminence can countervail the dangers which haunt greatneſs, let him affect to over-top others; for me, let me rather be ſafely low, then high with perill. After others envy, the next attendant upon greatneſſe is our own cares; how doe theſe diſquiet the Beds, and ſawce the Tables of the wealthy? breaking their ſleeps, galling their ſides, embittering their pleaſures,

ſhortning

ſhortning their days: How bitterly doe vve finde the holieſt men complaining of thoſe diſtractions, vvhich have attended their earthly promotions? *Nazianzen* cries out of them as no other then the bane of the ſoul; and that other *Gregory*, whom we are wont to call the laſt of the beſt Biſhops of Rome, and the firſt of the bad, paſſionately bewails this clogge of his high preferment: I confeſſe, ſaith he, that whiles I am outwardly advanced, I am inwardly fallen lower: this burdenſome honour depreſſes me, and innumerable cares diſquiet me on all ſides; my minde (grown almoſt ſtupid with thoſe temporall cares which are ever barking in mine ears) is forced upon earthly things; thus he: There are indeed cares which as they may be uſed, may help us on towards Heaven; ſuch as *Melanchthon* owns to his *Camerarius*; My

G. Naz. Carm. de calam. ſuis.

Greg. l. 7. Epi. 12. 7.

In vita Melanct.

cares, ſaith he, ſend me to my prayers, and my prayers diſpell my cares; but thoſe anxieties vvhich commonly wait upon greatneſſe, diſtract the minde, and impair the body.

It is an obſervation of the Jewiſh Doctors, that *Joſeph* the Patriarch vvas of a ſhorter life then the reſt of his brethren; and they render this reaſon of it, for that his cares were as much greater, as his place was higher: It vvas not an unfit compariſon of him, vvho reſembled a Coronet upon the Temples, to a pail upon the head; We have ſeen thoſe, who have carried full and heavy veſſels on the top of their heads, but then they have walked evenly, and erect under that load; we never ſaw any that could dance under ſuch a weight, if either they bend, or move vehemently, all their carriage is ſpilled: Earthly greatneſs is a nice thing, and

Sbicardus.

& requires ſo much charineſſe in the managing; as the contentment of it cannot requite; He is vvorthy of honey, that deſires to lick it off from thorns; for my part, I am of the minde of him who profeſſed, not to care for thoſe favours, that compelled him to lie waking.

Sect. XI.

Danger of diſtemper, both bodily and ſpirituall, that commonly follows great means: and torment in parting with them.

IN the next place, I ſee greatneſſe not more pale, and worn vvith cares, then ſvvoln up, and ſickly with exceſſe; Too much oyle poured in, puts out the Lamp, Superfluity is guilty of a world of diſeaſes, which the ſpare diet of poverty is free from; How have vve ſeen great mens eies ſurfeited at that full

Table, whereof their palate could not taſte, and they have riſen diſcontentedly glutted with the ſight of that, vvhich their ſtomach vvas uncapable to receive; and vvhen, not giving ſo much law to nature, as to put over their gluttonous meal, (their vvanton appetite charging them with a nevv variety of curious morſels, and laviſh cups) they finde themſelves overtaken with feverous diſtempers, the Phyſitian muſt ſucceed the Cook; and a ſecond ſickneſſe muſt cure the firſt: But alas, theſe bodily indiſpoſitions are nothing to thoſe ſpirituall evils, vvhich are incident into ſecular greatneſs. It is a true word of S. *Ambroſe*, ſeconded by common experience, that an high pitch of honour is ſeldome held up without ſinne; And S. *Jerome* tels us, it vvas a common Proverb in his time, That a rich man either is vvicked,

Ambroſ. l. 4 Epiſt. 29.

Hieron. Ep. ad Hedibium.

ed, or a vvicked mans heir: Not, but that rich *Abraham* may have a boſome for poor *Lazarus* to reſt in, and many great Kings have been great Saints in Heaven, and there is ſtill room for many more; but that commonly great temptations follow great eſtates, and oftentimes overtake them; neither is it for nothing, that riches are by our bleſſed Saviour ſtyled the Mammon of iniquity, & wealth is by the holy Apoſtle branded with deceitfulneſſe; ſuch as cheat many millions of their ſouls. 1 Tim. 6.

Add unto theſe (if you pleaſe) the torment of parting with that pelf, and honour, vvhich hath ſo groſly bewitched us; ſuch as may well verifie that vvhich *Lucius* long ſince wrote to the Biſhops of *France*, and *Spain*, that one houres miſchief makes us forget the pleaſure of the greateſt exceſſe. I marvell not at *Ep. Lucii ad Epiſc. Gall. & Hiſp.*

our Engliſh Jew, of whom our ſtory ſpeaks, that would rather part with his teeth, then his bags: how many have wee knowne that have poured out their life together with their gold, as men that would not out-live their earthen god; yea (woe is mee) how many ſoules have beene loſt in the ſinne of getting, and in the quarrell of leeſing this thicke clay, as the Prophet tearmes it? But laſtly, that which is yet the foreſt of all the inconveniences, is the ſadneſſe of the reckoning, which muſt come in after theſe plentifull entertainments; for there is none of all our cates here, but muſt be billed up; and great Accompts muſt have long Audits: how hard a thing it is in this caſe, to have an *Omnia æquè?* In the failing whereof, how is the Conſcience affected? I know not

not whether more tormented, or tormenting the miſerable ſoul; ſo as the great Owner is but (as witty *Bromiard* compares him) like a weary Jade, which all the day long hath been labouring under the load of a great treaſure; and at night lies down with a galled back.

By that time therefore wee have ſummed up all, and finde here envy, cares, ſickneſſes both of body and ſoul, torment in parting with, and more torment in reckoning for, theſe earthly greatneſſes; wee ſhall be convinced of ſufficient reaſon to be well apaid with their want.

SECT. XII.

Consideration of the benefits of Poverty.

LEt the fifth Consideration be, the benefit of Poverty; such, and so great, as are enough to make us in love with having nothing.

For first, what an advantage is it, to be free from those gnawing cares, which (like *Tityus* his Vulture) feed upon the Heart of the Great? Here is a man that sleeps (*Æthiopian*-like) with his doores open; no dangers threaten him, no feares break his rest; hee starts not out of his bed at midnight, and cries Theeves, he feels no rack of ambitious thoughts, he frets not at the disappointment of his false hopes, hee cracks not his brain with hazardous

zardous plots, he miſ-doubts no undermining of emulous rivals, no traps of hollow friendſhip, but lives ſecurely in his homely Cottage, quietly enjoying ſuch proviſion, as nature, and honeſt induſtry furniſh him withall; for his drinke, the neighbour Spring ſaves him the charge of his Exciſe; and when his better earnings have fraught his trencher with a warm, and pleaſing morſell, and his cup with a ſtronger liquor, hovv chearfully is he affected with that happy variety; and in the ſtrength of it digeſts many of his thinner meals?

Meals uſually ſawced with an healthfull hunger, wherein no uncocted Crudities oppreſſe Nature, and cheriſh diſeaſe: Here are no Gouts, no Dropſies, no Hypochondriack paſſions, no Convulſive fits, no diſtempers of ſurfeits, but a clear, and wholeſome vigor of body, and an

an easie putting over the light tasks of digestion, to the constant advantage of health.

And as for outward dangers, what an happy immunity doth commonly blesse the poore man? how can he fear to fall, that lies flat upon the ground? The great Pope, *Boniface* the seventh, vvhen hee saw many stately Buildings ruined vvith Earthquakes, is glad to raise him a little Cabin of boards in the midst of a Meadovv, and there findes it safest to shelter his triple Crown. When great men hoist their Top-sail, and launch forth into the deep, having that large clew which they spread, expos'd to all windes, and weathers, the poor man sails close by the shore; and when hee foresees a storme to threaten him, puts in to the next Creek; and wears out in a quiet security that Tempest, wherein he sees prouder Vessels miserably

miſerably toſt, and at laſt, fatally wracked.

This man is free from the perill of ſpightfull machinations; No man whets his Axe to cut down a ſhrub, it is the large Timber of the world that hath cauſe to fear hewing: Neither is he leſſe free inwardly from the galling ſtroaks of a ſelf-accuſing Conſcience; here is no remurmuring of the heart for guilty ſubornations, no checks for the ſecret contrivances of publique villanies; no heart-breaking for the failings of bloudy deſignes; or late remorſe for their ſucceſſe; but quiet, & harmleſſe thoughts of ſeaſonable frugality, of honeſt recreation, with an un-interrupted freedome of recourſe to Heaven.

And if at any time, by either hoſtile, or caſuall means, he be bereft of his little, he ſmiles in the face of a theef; and is no whit aſtoniſhed to ſee his thatch on

on a flame, as knowing how eaſie a ſupply will repair his loſſe.

And when he ſhall come to his laſt cloſe, his heart is not ſo glewed to the world, that he ſhould be loth to part; his ſoul is not tyed up in bags, but flies out freely to her everlaſting Reſt. Oh the ſecret vertue and happineſſe of Poverty; which none but the right diſpoſed minde knows how to value! It was not for nothing that ſo many great Saints have embraced it, rather then the rich proffers of the vvorld; That ſo many great Princes have exchanged their Thrones for quiet Cels; Who ſo cannot be thankful for a little, upon theſe conditions, I wiſh he may be puniſhed with abundance.

SECT.

SECT. XIII.

Conſidering how little will ſuffice Nature.

NEither will it a little avail to the furtherance of our *Contentation*, to conſider how little will ſuffice Nature, and that all the reſt is but matter of Opinion: It is the Apoſtles charge, Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content: Indeed what uſe is there of more, then what may nouriſh us within, and cover us without? If that be wholſome, and agreeable to our bodily diſpoſition, whether it be fine, or courſe, Nature paſſes not; it is meerly Will that is guilty of this wanton and faſtidious choice; It is fit that Civilitie ſhould make difference of clothings; and that vveakneſſe of body,

1 Tim. 6. 9

body, or eminence of Eſtate ſhould make differences of diets; Elſe, why not Ruſſet as well as Scarlet? Beef, as Pheſant? the Graſhopper feeds on dew, the Chameleon on air, what care they for other Viands? Our Books tell us, that thoſe *Anachorets* of old, that went aſide into Wilderneſſes, and ſuſtained themſelves with the moſt ſpare diet, ſuch as thoſe deſerts could afford, out-lived the date of other mens lives, in whom Nature is commonly ſtifled with a gluttonous variety: How ſtrong, and vigorous above their neighbour Grecians, were the Lacedemonians held of old? who by the Ordinance of their Law-giver, held themſelves to their black broth, which when *Dionyſius* would needs taſte of, his Cook truly told him, that if he would reliſh that fare, he muſt exerciſe ſtrongly, as they did, and waſh in

Paulo primo Eremitæ in ſpelunca viventi palma & cibum & veſtimentum præbebat: quod cum impoſſibile videatur, Jeſum teſtor & Angelos vidiſſe me Monachos, de quibus unus per 30. annos clauſus, hordeaceo pane & lutulenta aqua vixit. Hieron. de vita Pauli. Revelatur Antonio nonagenario, de Paulo agente jam 113 annum, eſſe alium ſe ſanctiorem Monachum, ibid.

in *Eurotas:* Who knows not that our Iſland doth not afford more able Bodies, then they that eat, and drink Oats? And whom have wee ſeene more healthfull and active, then the children of poor men, trayned up hardly in their Cottages with fare as little, as courſe?

Doe I ſee a poor Indian husbanding one tree to all his houſhold uſes; finding in that one Plant, Timber, Thatch, Meat, Medicine, Wine, Honey, Oyle, Sawce, Drink, Utenſils, Ships, Cables, Sayles? and doe I rove over all the latitude of Nature for contentment? Our appetite is truly unreaſonable, neither will know any bounds: We begin with neceſſaries, as *Pliny* juſtly obſerves, and from thence we riſe to exceſſe, puniſhing our ſelves with our owne wilde deſires; whereas, if wee were wiſe, we might finde mediocrity an eaſe. *Plin. l. 26. c. 6.*

Either

Either extream is alike deadly; he that over-afflicts his body, kils a Subject; he that pampers it, nouriſhes an Enemy. Too much abſtinence turns vice, and too much ingurgitation is one of the ſeven, and at once deſtroys both Nature and Grace. The beſt meaſure of having or deſiring, is not what we would, but what we ought: Neither is he rich that hath much; but he that deſires not much: A diſcreet frugality is fitteſt to moderate both our wiſhes, and expences; which if we want, wee prove dangerouſly prodigall in both; if we have, we doe happily improve our ſtock to the advantage of our ſelves, and others.

Hugo. Inſtit. Mona. Reg. S. Columb.

Senec. Epiſt. 38.

SECT.

SECT. XIV.

Conſidering the inconveniences, and miſeries of diſcontentment.

THe next inducement to *Contentation*, ſhall be the ſerious conſideration of the miſerable inconveniences of the contrary diſpoſition; Diſcontentment is a mixture of anger, and of grief; both which are wont to raiſe up fearfull tempeſts in the ſoul; Hee teareth himſelf in his anger, ſaith *Bildad*, concerning that mirrour of patience; And the ſorrow of the world worketh death, ſaith the choſen Veſſell: ſo as the Malecontent, whether he be angry or ſad, miſchieves himſelf both ways; There cannot be a truer word then that of wiſe *Solomon*, Anger reſteth in the boſome of fools; What can be more fooliſh

Job 18.4.

Eccleſ 7.9.

liſh then for a man, becauſe he thinks God hath made him miſerable by croſſes, to make himſelf more miſerable by his own diſtempers? If the clay had ſenſe, what a mad thing were it for it to ſtruggle with the Potter? and if a man wil ſpurn againſt ſtrong Iron-pikes, what can he hope to carry away but wounds? How witleſs a thing it is for a man to torment himſelf with the thoughts of thoſe evils, that are paſt all remedy? What wiſe beholder would not have ſmiled with pity and ſcorn, to have ſeen great *Auguſtus*, after the defeat of ſome choice Troops, to knock his head againſt the wall, and to hear him paſſionately cry out; *O Varus*, reſtore me my loſt Legions? Who would not have been angry with that cholerick Prophet to hear him ſo furiouſly conteſt with his Maker for a withered Gourd? What an affliction was it

it to good *Jacob* (more then the ſterility of a beloved wife) to hear *Rachel* ſay; Give mee children, or elſe I die? yea, how ill did it ſound in the mouth of the Father of the faithfull; Lord God, what wilt thou give mee, ſeeing I goe childeleſſe? Yet thus froward and techy is nature in the beſt; if we may not have all we would have, all that we have is nothing; if wee bee not perfectly humoured, we are wilfully unthankfull; All *Iſrael* is nothing worth to *Ahab*, if he may not have one poor Vineyard: How muſt this needs irritate a munificent God, to ſee his bounty contemned out of a childiſh pettiſhneſſe? How can he forbeare to take away from us his ſleighted mercies? How can he hold his hand from plaguing ſo ingratefull diſreſpects of his favours?

Gen. 30. 1.

Gen. 15. 2.

As for that other paſſion of grief, what woſull work doth it make

make in ungoverned mindes? How many have we knowne, that out of thought for unrecoverable losses, have lost themselves? how many have runne from their wits? how many from their lives? Yea, how many, that out of an impatience to stay the leisure of vengeance, have made their own hands their hasty executioners? And even where this extremity prevails not; look about, and yee shall see men that are not able matches to their passions, wofully macerating thēselves with their own thoughts, wearing out their tedious dayes upon the rack of their own hearts; and making good that observation of the wise man; By the sorrow of the heart, the spirit is broken. Pro.15.13

Now all these mischiefs might have been happily prevented by a meek yeeldance of our selves to the hands of an all-wise, and an

an all-mercifull God, and by an humble compoſure of our affections to a quiet ſuffering; It is the power of patience to calm the heart in the moſt bluſtering trials; and when the veſſell is moſt toſſed, yet to ſecure the fraight: This, if it doe not abate of our burden, yet it addes to our ſtrength, and wins the Father of Mercies both to pity, and retribution. Pſ. 37.7. Jam. 5.7.

Whereas murmuring *Iſraelites* can never be free from judgements; and it is a dreadfull word that God ſpeaketh of that choſen Nation; Mine heritage is unto me as a Lion in the foreſt; it, ſtill, yelleth againſt me, therefore have I hated it; A Childe that ſtruggles under the rod, juſtly doubles his ſtripes, and an unruly Malefactor drawes on, beſides death, tortures. Jer. 12.8.

SECT.

make in ungoverned mindes? How many have we knowne, that out of thought for unrecoverable losses, have lost themselves? how many have runne from their wits? how many from their lives? Yea, how many, that out of an impatience to stay the leisure of vengeance, have made their own hands, their hasty executioners? And even where this extremity prevails not; look about, and yee shall see men that are not able matches to their passions, wofully macerating thēselves with their own thoughts, wearing out their tedious dayes upon the rack of their own hearts; and making good that observation of the wise man; By the sorrow of the heart, the spirit is broken. Pro. 15. 13

Now all these mischiefs might have been happily prevented by a meek yeeldance of our selves to the hands of an all-wise, and

an all-mercifull God, and by an humble compoſure of our affections to a quiet ſuffering; It is the power of patience to calm the heart in the moſt bluſtering trials; and when the veſſell is moſt toſſed, yet to ſecure the fraight: This, if it doe not abate of our burden, yet it addes to our ſtrength, and wins the Father of Mercies both to pity, and retribution. Pſ. 37.7. Jam. 5.7.

Whereas murmuring *Iſraelites* can never be free from judgements; and it is a dreadfull word that God ſpeaketh of that choſen Nation; Mine heritage is unto me as a Lion in the foreſt; it, ſtill, yelleth againſt me, therefore have I hated it; A Childe that ſtruggles under the rod, juſtly doubles his ſtripes, and an unruly Malefactor drawes on, beſides death, tortures. Jer. 12.8.

SECT.

Sect. XV.

Consid. the vicissitudes of favours and afflictions.

FUrthermore, it is a main help towards *Contentation*, to consider the gracious vicissitudes of Gods dealing with us: how he intermixes favours with his crosses; tempering our much honey, with some little gall; the best of us are but shrewd children, yet he chides us not always, saith the *Psalmist*: hee smiles often, for one frown; and why should wee not take one with another? It was the answer wherewith that admirable pattern of patience stopped the querulous mouth of his tempting wife; What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evill?

Ps. 103. 9.

Job 2. 10.

It was a memorable example which came lately to my knowledge

ledge of a worthy Christian, who had lived to his middle age in much health, and prosperity, and was now for his two last years miserably afflicted with the Strangury; who in the midst of his torments could say, Oh my Lord God, how gracious hast thou been unto me! thou hast given me eight and forty years of health, and now but two years of pain; thou mightest have caused me to lie in this torture all the days of my life; and now thou hast caried mee comfortably through the rest, and hast mercifully taken up with this last parcell of my torment; blessed be thy Name for thy mercy in forbearing me, and for thy justice in afflicting mee. To be thankfull for present blessings is but ordinary, but to be so thankfull for mercies past, that the memory of them should be able to put over the sense of present miseries, is an high improvement of grace. L The

The very Heathens by the light of Nature and their own experience, could obſerve this interchange of Gods proceedings; and made ſome kinde of uſe of them accordingly: *Camillus*, after he had upon tenne yearsſiege, taken the rich City *Veios*, prayd that ſome miſ-hap might befall himſelf and Rome to temper ſo great an happines; when one would have thought the prize would not countervail the labour, and the loſſe of time and bloud; And *Alexander* the great, when report was made to him of many notable Victories, atchieved by his Armies, could ſay; O *Jupiter*, mixe ſome miſ-fortune with theſe happy news: Lo, theſe men could tell that it is neither fit, nor ſafe for great bleſſings to walk alone, but that they muſt be attended with their pages, afflictions; why ſhould not we Chriſtians expect

Livius.

pect them with patience, and thanks?

They say, Thunder and Lightning hurts not, if it be mixed with Rain. In those hot Countries, which lie under the scalding Zone, when the first showres fall after a long drought, it is held dangerous to walk suddenly abroad; for that the earth so moistned sends up unwholsome steams; but in those parts where the Rain and Sun-shine are usually interchanged, it is most pleasant to take the air of the earth newly refreshed with kindly showres; Neither is it otherwise in the course of our lives; this medley of good and evill conduces not a little to the health of our soules: One of them must serve to temper the other; and both of them to keep the heart in order.

Were our afflictions long, and our comforts rare and short, we had yet reason to be thankfull;

the leaſt is more then God ows us: but now, when if heavineſſe endure for a night, joy commeth in the morning, and dwels with us, ſo, that ſome fits of ſorrow are recompenſed with many moneths of joy; how ſhould our hearts overflow with thankfulneſſe, and eaſily digeſt ſmall grievances, out of the comfortable ſenſe of larger bleſſings?

But if we ſhall caſt up our eies to Heaven, and there behold the glorious remuneration of our ſufferings, how ſhall we contemn the worſt that earth can doe unto us? There, there is glory enough to make us a thouſand times more then amends for all that we are capable to endure; Yea, if this Earth were Hell, and Men Devils, they could not inflict upon us thoſe torments, which might hold any equality with the glory which ſhall be revealed; and even of the worſt of them we

must

must say with the blessed Apostle; Our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding, eternall weight of glory: When the blessed Proto-Martyr *Stephen* had stedfastly fixed his eies on Heaven, and (that Curtain being drawn) had seen the Heavens opened, and therein the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God; doe we think he cared ought for the sparkling eies, and gnashed teeth, and killing stones of the enraged multitude? Oh poor impotent Jews, how far was that divine soul above the reach of your malice? how did he triumph over your cruelty? how did he by his happy evolation make all those stones precious?

2 Cor. 4. 17.

Acts 7.

Sect. XVI.

Consid. the examples of Contentation, *both without, and within the Church of God.*

LAstly, it cannot but be a powerfull motive unto *Contentation*, that we lay before us the notable examples of men, whether worse, or better then our selves, that have been eminent in the practice of this vertue; men, that out of the meer strength of morality, have run away with losses, and poverty as a light burden; that out of their free choice have fallen upon those conditions, which we are ready to fear, and shrinke from: What a shame is it for Christians to bee out-stripped herein by very Pagans? If we look upon the ancient Philosophers; their low valuation of these

these outward things, and their willing abdication of those comforts, wherewith others were too much affected, made them admired of the multitude; Here doe I see a Cynick housed in his Tub, scorning all wealth and state; and making still even with his victuals, and the day; who, when he was invited to supper to one of *Alexanders* great Lords, could say; I had rather lick salt at *Athens*, then feast with *Craterus*: Here I meet with him, whom their Oracle styled the wisest of men, walking bare-foot in a patcht thred-bare cloak, contemning honors, and all earthly things; and when that garment would hang no longer on his back, I can hear him say, I would have bought a Cloak, if I had had mony; after which word, saith *Sedecia*, whosoever offered to give, came too late; *Apollodorus*, amongst the rest, sends

ἡμερόβιος.

him a rich mantle towards his end, and is refuſed; With what patience doth this man bear the loud ſcoldings of his *Xantippe*? making no other of them, then the creaking of a Cart-wheel: with what brave reſolution doth he repell the proffers of *Archelaus*, telling him how cheap the Market afforded meal at *Athens*, and the fountains water? Here I meet with a *Zeno*, formerly rich in his traffique for purple, now impoveriſht by an ill Sea-voyage, and can hear him ſay, I ſailed beſt when I Ship-wrackt: Here I ſee an *Ariſtippus* drowning his gold in the ſea, that it might not drown him: Here I can hear a *Democritus*, or *Cleanthes*, when hee was asked how a man ſhould be rich, anſwer; If he be poor in deſires.

What ſhould I ſpeak of thoſe Indian Sophiſts, that took their name from their nakednesſe; whom

whom we hear to ſay; The ſky is our houſe, and the Earth our bed; we care not for gold, we contemn death: One of them can tell *Oneſicritus*; As the Mother is to the Childe, ſo is the Earth to mee; The Mother gives Milk to her Infant; ſo doth the Earth yeeld all neceſſaries to mee; And when gold was offered to him, by that great Conquerour; Perſwade (ſaid he) if thou canſt, theſe birds to take thy ſilver and gold, that they may ſing the ſweeter; and if thou canſt not doe that, wouldſt thou have me worſe then them? Adding moreover in a ſtrong diſcourſe; Naturall hunger, when we have taken food, ceaſeth; and if the minde of man did alſo naturally deſire gold, ſo ſoon as he hath received that which he wiſhed, the deſire and appetite of it would preſently ceaſe; but ſo far is it from this ſatiety, that the more it hath,

Inter opera Ambroſii De moribus Brachmanorum.

the more it doth, without any intermiſſion, long for more; becauſe this deſire proceeds not from any motion of nature, but onely out of the wantonneſſe of mans own will, to which no bounds can bee ſet. Bluſh, O Chriſtian Soul, (whoſoever thou art, that readeſt theſe lines) to hear ſuch words falling from Heathen lips, when thou ſeeſt thoſe that profeſſe godlineſſe, dote upon theſe worthleſſe metals, and tranſported with the affectation and cares of theſe earthly proviſions.

If from theſe patterns of men that ſhould be below our ſelves, we look up to the more noble precedents of Prophets and Apoſtles; Lo, there we finde *Elijah* fed by Ravens; *Eliſha* boarding with his poor *Sareptan* Hoſteſſe; An hundred Prophets fed by fifty in a Cave, with bread and water; The ſons of the Prophets for the enlarging

1 Kings 18. 13. 2 King. 6. 2,3,4,5.

of

of their over-ſtrait lodgings, hard at work; they are their owne Carpenters, but their tools are borrowed; There we ſhall find a few barley loaves, and little fiſhes, the houſhold proviſion of our Saviours train: Yea, there we finde the moſt glorious Apoſtle, the great Doctor of the Gentiles, employing his hands to feed his belly; buſily ſtitching of skins for his Tent-work; Yea, what doe we look at any or all of theſe, when we ſee the Son of God, the God of all the world, in the form of a ſervant? Nova Cratch to cradle him in, nor a Grave to bury him in, was his own; and he that could command Heaven and Earth, can ſay, The Foxes have holes, the Birds have neſts, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head. Mat.8.20.

Who now can complain of want, when he hears his Lord, and Saviour but thus provided for?

for? He could have brought down with him a celeſtiall houſe, and have pitcht it here below, too glorious for earthen eies to have lookt upon: Hee could have commanded all the precious things that lie ſhrowded in the bowels of the Earth, to have made up a Majeſticall Palace for him, to the dazling of the eies of all beholders; He could have taken up the ſtateliеſt Court that any earthly Monarch poſſeſſed, for his peculiar habitation: But his greatneſſe was Spirituall and Heavenly; and he that owned all would have nothing, that he might ſanctifie want unto us; and that he might teach us by his bleſſed example, to ſit down contented with any thing, with nothing.

By that time therefore wee have laid all theſe things together, and have ſeriouſly conſidered of the mean valuation of all theſe

theſe earthly things, for their tranſitorineſſe, unſatisfaction, danger; of the over-ruling Providence of the Almighty, who moſt wiſely, juſtly, mercifully diſpoſeth of us and all events that befall us; of the worſe condition of many thouſand others; of the great inconveniences that attend great and full eſtates; of the ſecret benefits of poverty; of the ſmalneſſe of that pittance that may ſuffice Nature; of the miſeries that wait upon diſcontentment; of the mercifull viciſſitudes of favours, wherewith God pleaſeth to interchange our ſuffe-rings; and laſtly, the great examples of thoſe, as well without, as vvithin the boſome of the Church, that have gone before us, and led us the way to *Contentation*: our judgement cannot chuſe but be ſufficiently convinced, that there is abundant reaſon to vvin our hearts to a quiet

quiet and contented entertainment of want, and all other outward afflictions.

Sect. XVII.

Of Contentment in death it selfe.

But all these intervenient miseries are sleight in comparison of the last, and utmost of evils; Death; Many a one grapples chearfully with these triviall afflictions, who yet looks pale, and trembles at the King of fear: His very Name hath terrour in it, but his lookes more: The courageous Champion of Christ, the blessed Apostle; and with him, every faithfull soul, makes his challenge universall, to whatsoever estate he is in; to the estate of Death, therefore, no lesse then the afflictive incidence of life: When therefore this gastly Giant shall stalk

ſtalk forth, and bid defiance to the whole Hoſt of *Iſrael*; and when the timorous unbeleevers ſhall run away at the ſight of him, and endeavour to hide their heads from his preſence; the good ſoul armed, not with the unmeet and cumberſome harmneſſe of fleſh and bloud, but with the ſure (though inviſible) armour of God, dares come forth to meet him, and in the name of the Lord of Hoſts, both bids him battle and foils him in the Combat; and now having laid him on the ground, can triumphingly ſay, O Death, where is thy ſting? O Grave, where is thy Victory? Five ſmooth pebles there are, which if we carry in our ſcrip, we ſhall be able to quell, not onely the power of death, but the terror too.

Whereof the firſt is a ſure apprehenſion of both the unavoidable neceſſity, and certain benefit of death: A neceſſity, groun-

Heb.9.27.

grounded upon the just and eternall Decree of Heaven: It is appointed to all men once to die; and what a madnesse were it for a man to think of an exemption from the common condition of mankind? Mortality is, as it were, essentiall to our Nature; neither could wee have had our souls but upon the tearms of a re-delivery, when they shall be called for; If the holiest Saints, or the greatest Monarchs sped otherwise, wee might have some colour of repining: Now, grieve if thou wilt, that thou art a man; grieve not, that being man thou must die.

Neither is the benefit inferiour to the necessity; Lo here the remedy of all our cares, the physick for all our maladies, the rescue from all our feares and dangers, earnestly sued for by the painfull, dearly welcome to the distressed: Yea, lo here the Cherub

Cherub that keeps the gate of Paradiſe; there is no entrance but under his hand; In vain do we hope to paſſe to the glory of Heaven, any other way then through the gates of Death.

The ſecond is the Conſcience of a well-led life; Guiltineſſe will make any man cowardly, unable to looke danger in the face, much more Death; whereas the innocent is bold as a Lion: What a difference therefore there is betwixt a Martyr, and a Malefactor? this latter knows he hath done ill, and therefore if he can take his death but patiently, it is well; the former knows he hath done well, and therefore takes his death not patiently onely, but chearfully.

But becauſe no mortall man can have ſo innocently led his life, but that he ſhall have paſſed many offences againſt his moſt holy, and righteous God; here muſt be, Thirdly, a finall peace

peace firmly made betwixt God and the ſoul. Two powerfull agents muſt mediate in it; a lively Faith, and a ſerious Repentance; for thoſe ſins can never appear againſt us, that are waſhed off with our tears; and being juſtified by faith we have peace with God, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Now, if we have made the Judge our friend, what can the Sergeant doe?

Rom. 5. 1.

The fourth is the power, and efficacy of Chriſts death applyed to the ſoul: Wherefore dyed he, but that we might live? Wherefore would he, who is the Lord of life, die, but to ſanctifie, ſeaſon, and ſweeten death to us? Who would goe any other way then his Saviour went before him? who can fear that enemy, whom his Redeemer hath conquered for him? who can run away from that Serpent, whoſe ſting is pulled out? Oh Death, my Saviour hath been thy death, and

and therefore thou canſt not be mine.

The fifth is, the comfortable expectation, and aſſurance of a certain reſurrection, and an immediate glory: I doe but lay me down to my reſt, I ſhall ſleep quietly, and riſe glorioufly: My ſoul, in the mean time, no ſooner leaves my body, then it enjoys God; It did lately through my bodily eyes ſee my ſad friends, that bade me farewell with their tears; now it hath the bliſſe-making viſion of God: I am no ſooner lanched forth, then I am at the haven, where I would be; Here is that which were able to make amends for a thouſand deaths; a glory, infinite, eternall, incomprehenſible.

This ſpirituall Ammunition ſhall ſufficiently furniſh the ſoul for her encounter with her laſt enemy; ſo as ſhe ſhall not only endure, but long for this Combat;

bat; and ſay with the choſen Veſſell, I deſire to depart, and to be with Chriſt.

Phil. 1. 23.

Sect. XVIII.

The miſeries and inconveniences of the continued conjunction of the ſoul and body.

NOw for that long converſation cauſeth entireneſſe, and the parting of old friends and partners (ſuch the ſoul and body are) cannot but be grievous, although there were no actuall pain in the diſſolution: It will be requiſite for us, ſeriouſly to conſider the ſtate of this conjunction; and to enquire what good offices the one of them doth to the other, in their continued union, for which they ſhould be ſo loth to part: And here wee ſhall finde that thoſe two, however united to make

make up one perſon, yet (as it fals out in croſſe matches) they are in continuall domeſtique jars one with the other, and entertain a ſecret familiar kind of hoſtility betwixt themſelves; For the fleſh luſteth againſt the ſpirit, and the ſpirit againſt the fleſh, and theſe are contrary the one to the other. One ſays well, that if the body ſhould implead the ſoul, it might bring many foul impeachments againſt it; and ſue it for many great injuries done to that earthly part: And the ſoul again hath no fewer quarrels againſt the body: betwixt them both there are many brawls, no agreement. Our Schools have reckoned up therefore eight main incommodities, which the ſoul hath cauſe to complain of in her conjunction with the body: whereof the firſt is the defilement of Originall ſinne, wherewith the ſoul is not tainted as it proceeds, alone, Gal.5.17.

lone, from the pure hands of its Creator, but as it makes up a part of a son of *Adam*, who brought this guilt upon humane nature; so as now this composition, which we call man, is corrupt: Who can bring a clean thing out of that which is unclean? saith *Job*.

Job 14.4.

The second is a proneneſſe to ſinne, which, but by the meeting of theſe partners, had never been; the ſoul, if ſingle, would have been innocent; thus matched, what evill is it not apt to entertain? An ill conſort is enough to poyſon the beſt diſpoſition.

The difficulty of doing well is the third; for how averſe are we by this conjunction from any thing that is good? This clog hinders us from walking roundly in the ways of God: The good that I would doe, I doe not, ſaith the choſen Veſſell.

Rom.7.19

The

The fourth is the dulneſſe of our underſtanding, and the dimneſſe of our mentall eies, eſpecially in the things pertaining unto God; which now we are forced to behold through the vail of fleſh: if therefore we miſ-know, the fault is in the mean, through which we doe imperfectly diſcover them.

The fift is a perpetuall impugnation, and ſelf-conflict, either part labouring to oppoſe and vanquiſh the other. This field is fought in every mans boſome, without any poſſibility of peace, or truce, till the laſt moment of diſſolution.

The ſixt is the racking ſolicitude of cares, which continually diſtract the ſoul, not ſuffering it to reſt at eaſe, whiles it carries this fleſh about it.

The ſeventh is the multiplicity of paſſions which daily bluſter within us, and raiſe up continuall tempeſts in our lives, diſ-

disquieting our peace, & threatning our ruine.

The eight is the retardation of our glory; for flesh and bloud cannot inherit the kingdome of God; wee must lay down our load if we would enter into Heaven: The seed cannot fructifie unlesse it die. I cannot blame nature if it could wish not to be unclothed, but to be clothed upon: but so hath the eternall wisdome ordered, that we should first lay down, ere we can take up; and be devested of earth, ere we can partake of Heaven.

Now then, sith so many and great discommodities doe so unavoidably accompany this match of soul and body, and all of them cease instantly in the act of their dissolution; what reason have we to be too deeply affected with their parting? Yea, how should we rather rejoyce that the houre is come, wherein

wherein we ſhall be quit both of the guilt and temptations of ſinne; wherein the clogge ſhall bee taken away from our heels, and the vail from our eies; wherein no inteſtine wars ſhall threaten us, no cares ſhall diſquiet us, no paſſions ſhall torment us; and laſtly, wherein we may take the free poſſeſſion of that glory, which we have hitherto lookt at only afar off from the top of our *Piſgah*?

Sect. XIX.

Holy dispositions for Contentment: and first, Humility.

HItherto, we have dwelt in those powerfull considerations which may work us to a quiet contentment with whatsoever adverse estate, whether of life or death; after which, we addresse our selves to those meet dispositions, which shall render us fully capable of this blessed *Contentation*; and shall make all these considerations effectuall to that happy purpose. Whereof the first is true Humility, under-valuing our selves, & setting an high rate upon every mercy that we receive; For, if a man have attained unto this, that he thinks every thing too good for him, and him-

ſelf leſſe then the leaſt bleſſing, and worthy of the heavieſt judgement; he cannot but ſit down thankfull for ſmall favours, and meekly content with mean afflictions: As contrarily, the proud man ſtands upon points with his Maker, makes God his debter; looks diſdainfully at ſmall bleſſings; as if he ſaid, What, no more? and looks angerly at the leaſt croſſes; as if he ſaid, Why thus much? The father of the faithfull hath practically taught us this Leſſon of humility, who comes to God with duſt and aſhes in his mouth: And the Jewiſh Doctors tell us truly, that in every Diſciple of *Abraham*, there muſt be three things: a good eye, a meek ſpirit, and an humble ſoul; His Grandchilde *Jacob*, the Father of every true Iſraelite, had well taken it out; whiles he can ſay to his God,

Gen.18.27

Pirk. Avoth.

Gen.32.10 I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth which thou hast shewed unto thy servant: And indeed, in whomsoever it be the best measure of Grace is Humility; for the more Grace still, the greater Humility; and no Humility, no Grace: *Solomon* observed of old; and Saint *James* took it from him, That God resisteth the proud, and giveth Grace to the humble; so as he that is not humble, is not so much as capable of Grace; and he that is truly humble, is a fit subject for all Graces, and amongst the rest, for the Grace of *Contentation*: Give me a man therefore, that is vile in his own eies, that is sensible of his own wretchednesse, that knows what it is to sin, and what belongs to that sin whereof he is guilty; this man shall think it a mercy that he is any where out of Hell;

Pro.3.34.

Jam.4.6.

Hell; shall account all the evils that he is free from, so many new favors; shall reckon easie corrections amongst his blessings; and shall esteem any blessing infinitely obliging. Whereas contrarily, the proud begger is ready to throw Gods alms at his head, and swels at every lash, that he receives from the divine hand. Not without great cause, therefore, doth the royall Preacher Eccles.7.8 oppose the patient in spirit, to the proud in spirit; for the proud man can no more bee patient, then the patient can be discontent with whatsoever hand of his God. Every toy puts the proud man beside his patience; If but a flie be found in *Pharaohs* cup, he is straight in rage, (as the Jewish tradition lays the quarrell) and sends his Butler into durance: And if the Emperour doe but mistake the Stirrup of our

Countreyman Pope *Adrian*, he ſhall dance attendance for his Crown: If a *Mardochee* doe but fail of a courteſie to *Haman*, all Jewes muſt bleed to death; And how unquiet are our vain Dames, if this curle be not ſet right, or or that pinne miſ-placed? But the meek ſpirit is incurious; and ſo throughly ſubacted, that he takes his load from God (as the Camel from his Maſter) upon his knees: And for men, if they compell him to goe one mile, he goes twain; if they ſmite him on the right cheek, hee turns the other; if they ſue away his Coat, he parts with his Cloak alſo.

Mat. 5. 39, 40.

Heraclius the Emperour, when hee was about to paſſe through the golden gate, and to ride in royall ſtate through the ſtreets of Jeruſalem, being put in minde by *Zacharias* the Biſhop there, of the humble and dejected

dejected faſhion wherein his Saviour walked through thoſe ſtreets, towards his paſſion, ſtrips off his rich robes, lays aſide his Crown, & with bare head & bare feet, ſubmiſſely paces the ſame way that his Redeemer had caried his Croſſe towards his *Golgotha*: Every true Chriſtian is ready to tread in the deep ſteps of his Saviour, as well knowing that if hee ſhould deſcend to the Gates of Death, of the Grave, of Hell, he cannot bee ſo humbled, as the Son of God was for him: And indeed, this, and this alone, is the true way to glory; He that is Truth it ſelf, hath told us, that he who humbles himſelf ſhall be exalted; And wiſe *Solomon*, Before honour is humility. The Fuller treads upon that cloth which he means to whiten: And he that would ſee the ſtarres by day, muſt not climbe up into ſome high Mountain, but muſt de-

Pro. 15. 33

ſcend to the lower Cels of the earth. Shortly, whoſoever would raiſe up a firm building of *Contentation*, muſt bee ſure to lay the foundation in Humility.

Sect. XX.

Of a faithfull ſelfe-reſignation.

SEcondly, to make up a true contentment with the moſt adverſe eſtate, there is required a faithfull ſelfe-reſignation into the hands of that God, whoſe wee are; who, as he hath more right in us, then our ſelves, ſo he beſt knows what to doe with us: How graciouſly hath his mercy invited us to our own eaſe? Bee carefull (ſaith he) for nothing; but in every thing by prayer, and ſupplication,

Phil.4.6.

plication, with thankſgiving, let your requeſts bee made known unto God: we are naturally apt in our neceſſities to have recourſe to greater powers then our own; even where we have no engagement of their help; how much more ſhould we caſt our ſelves upon the Almighty, when he not onely allows, but ſolicits our reliance upon him? It was a queſtion that might have befitted the mouth of the beſt Chriſtian, which fell from *Socrates*, Since God himſelfe is carefull for thee, why art thou ſolicitous for thy ſelfe? If evils were let looſe upon us, ſo as it were poſſible for us to ſuffer any thing that God were not aware of, we might have juſt cauſe to ſink under adverſities; but now, that we know every dram of our affliction is weighed out to us, by that all-wiſe, and all-mercifull Provi-

dence; Oh our infidelity, if we doe make scruple of taking in the most bitter dose! Here then is the right use of that main duty of Christianity; to live by faith: Brute creatures live by sense, meer men by reason, Christians by faith. Now,
Heb. 11. 1. faith is the substance of things hoped for; the evidence of things not seen; In our extremities, we hope for Gods gracious deliverance, faith gives a subsistence to that deliverance, before it be: The mercies that God hath reserved for us, doe not yet show themselves; faith is the evidence of them, though yet unseen: It was the Motto of the learned and godly Divine Master *Perkins*, *Fidei vita vera vita*; The true life, is the life of faith; a word which that worthy servant of God did both write and live; neither indeed is any other life truly vitall, but this; for hereby

we

we enjoy God in all whatsoever occurrences: Are we abridged of means? we feed upon the cordiall Promises of our God: Doe we sigh and groan under varieties of grievous persecutions? out of the worst of them we can pick out comforts; whiles we can hear our Saviour say, Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousnesse sake; for theirs is the kingdome of Heaven: Are we deserred, and abandoned of friends? we see him by us, who hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee: Doe we droop under spirituall desertions? we hear the God of truth say; For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercy will I gather thee; In a little wrath I hid my face from thee, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer: Are we driven from home? If wee

Mat. 5. 10.

Heb. 13. 5.

Esa. 54. 7, 8

Pſal.139. 8,9. wee take the wings of the morning, and remain in the uttermoſt parts of the Sea; even there alſo ſhall thine hand lead us, and thy right hand ſhall hold us: Are we dungeon'd up from the ſight of the Sun? Peradventure the darkneſſe ſhall cover us; but then ſhall our night be turned into day; yea, the darkneſſe is no darkneſſe with thee: Are we caſt down upon the bed of ſickneſſe? He that is our God, is the God of ſalvation; and unto God the Lord belong the iſſues from death.

Verſe 10, 11.

Pſal.68.20

It cannot bee ſpoken hovv injurious thoſe men are to themſelves, that will be managing their owne cares, and plotting the prevention of their fears; and projecting their own, both indemnity, and advantages; for, as they lay an unneceſſary load upon their own

own ſhoulders, ſo they draw upon themſelves the miſeries of an unremediable diſappointment; Alas, how can their weakneſſe make good thoſe events which they vainly promiſe to themſelves, or avert thoſe judgements they would eſcape, or uphold them in thoſe evils they muſt undergoe? Whereas if wee put all this upon a gracious God, hee contrives it with eaſe; looking for nothing from us, but our truſt, and thankfulneſſe.

SECT.

SECT. XXI.

Of true inward riches.

IN the third place, it will be moſt requiſite to furniſh the ſoul with true inward riches; I mean not of meer morall vertues, (which yet are truly precious when they are found in a good heart) but of a wealth as much above them, as gold is above droſſe; Yea, as the thing which is moſt precious, is above nothing: And this ſhall be done, if we bring Chriſt home to the ſoul; if we can poſſeſſe our ſelves of him, who is God al-ſufficient; For, ſuch infinite contentment there is in the Son of God made ours, that whoſoever hath taſted of the ſweetneſſe of this comfort, is indifferent to all earthly things; and inſenſible of thoſe extream differences of events, where-

wherewith others are perplexed; How can he be dejected with the want of any thing, who is poſſeſſed of him that poſſeſſeth all things? How can he be over-affected with triviall profits, or pleaſures, who is taken up with the God of all comfort? Is Chriſt mine therefore? How can I fail of all contentment? How can he complain to want light, that dwels in the midſt of the Sun? How can he complain of thirſt, out of whoſe belly flow rivers of living water? Joh.7.38. What can I wiſh, that my Chriſt is not to me? Would I have meat and drink? My fleſh is meat indeed; and my bloud is drink indeed: Joh.6.55. Would I have clothing? But, put ye on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, ſaith the Apoſtle: Rom.13.14. Would I have medicine? He is the Tree of life, the leaves whereof are for the healing of the Nations: Rev.22.2. Would I have ſafety and protection? He

He truly is my ſtrength, and my ſalvation; he is my defence, ſo as I ſhall not fall; In God is my health and my glory; the Rock of my might, and in God is my truſt: Would I have direction? I am the way, and the truth: Would I have life? Chriſt is to me to live; I am the reſurrection and the life: Would I have all ſpirituall things? We are in Chriſt Jeſus, who of God is made unto us Wiſdome, and Righteouſneſſe, and Sanctification, and Redemption.

Pſ.62.6,7.

Phil.1.21

Joh.11.25

1Cor.1.30

Oh the happy condition of the man that is in Chriſt, and hath Chriſt in him! Shall I account him rich that hath ſtore of Oxen, and Sheep, and Horſes, and Camels; that hath heaps of metals, and ſome ſpots of ground; and ſhall I not account him infinitely more rich, that ownes and enjoyes him whoſe the earth is, and the fulneſſe of it; whoſe Heaven is, and the glory

glory of it? Shall I juſtly account that man great, whom the King will honour, and place near to himſelfe; and ſhall I not eſteeme that man more honourable, whom the King of Heawen is pleaſed to admit unto ſuch partnerſhip of glory, as to profeſſe; To him that overcommeth will I grant to ſit with me in my Throne; even as I alſo overcame, and am ſet downe with my Father in his Throne? Rev.3.23.

It is a true word of Saint *Auguſtine*, that every ſoul is either Chriſts Spouſe, or the Devils Harlot: Now if we be matched to Chriſt, the Lord of glory; what a bleſſed union is here? What can he withhold from us, that hath given us himſelf? I could envie the devotion of that man (though otherwiſe miſ-placed) whom Saint *Bernard* heard to ſpend the night in no other words, then, *Deus meus & omnia*; My God, and all things; Certainly,

tainly, he who hath that God, hath more then all things; he that wants him (what ever elſe he ſeemes to poſſeſſe) hath leſſe then nothing.

Sect. XXII.

Holy reſolutions: 1. *That our preſent eſtate is beſt for us.*

After theſe ſerious conſiderations, and meet diſpoſitions, ſhall in the laſt follow certain firme reſolutions for the full actuating our contentment: And firſt, we muſt reſolve (out of the unfailable grounds of divine Providence, formerly ſpoken of) that the preſent eſtate wherein we are, is certainly the beſt for us; and therefore wee muſt herein abſolutely captivate our underſtanding, and will, to that of the Higheſt: How unmeet Judges are fleſh and blood of

of the beſt fitneſſe of a condition for us? As ſome palates (which are none of the wholſomeſt) like nothing but ſweet meats, ſo our nature would be fed up with the only delicacies of pleaſures and proſperity; according to the falſe principle of *Ariſtippus*, that he onely is happy, which is delighted; but the all-wiſe God knowes another diet more fit for our health, and therefore graciouſly tempers our diſhes with the tart ſauces of affliction: The mother of the two ſons of *Zebedee*, and her ambitious children, are all for the chiefe Peerage in the Temporall kingdome of Chriſt; but he cals them to a bitter Cup, and a bloody baptiſme rather; and this was a far greater honour then that they ſued for: There is no earthly eſtate abſolutely good for all perſons; like as no gale can ſerve for all paſſengers. In *Africk*, they ſay, the North

North winde brings Clouds, and the South winde clears up: That plant which was ſtarved in one ſoile, in another proſpers; Yea, that which in ſome climate is poyſon, proves wholſome in another: Some one man, if he had anothers bleſſings, would run wilde; and if he had ſome other mans croſſes, would be deſperate; The infinite wiſdome of the great Governour of the world allots every one his due proportion;

Eſa. 28. 27. The Fitches are not threſhed with a threſhing inſtrument; neither is a Cartwheele turned about upon the Cummin; but the Fitches are beaten out with a ſtaffe, and the Cummin with a rod, ſaith *Eſay*: And no otherwiſe in matter of proſperity; *Joſephs* Coat may be party-coloured, and *Benjamins* meſſe may be five times ſo much as any of his brethren. It is marvell if they who did ſo much envie *Ioſeph*

Gen. 43. 34.

ſeph for his dream of ſuperiority, did not alſo envie *Benjamin* for ſo large a ſervice, and ſo rich gifts at his parting; this it ſeems gave occaſion for the good *Patriarchs* fear, when he charged them, See that you fall not out by the way: But, there had been no reaſon for ſo impotent an envie; whiles the gift is free, and each ſpeeds above his deſert, who can have cauſe to repine? It is enough that *Joſeph* knew a juſt reaſon of ſo unequall a diſtribution, though it were hidden from themſelves. The elder brother may grudge the fat Calfe, and the prime Robe to the returned Unthrift, but the Father knowes reaſon to make that difference. God is infinitely juſt and infinitely merciſull, in diſpenſing both his favours and puniſhment. In both kinds every man hath that which is fitteſt for him, becauſe it is that which Gods will hath deſigned

Gen. 45. 24.

ſigned to him; and that will is the moſt abſolute rule of juſtice: now if we can ſo frame our will to his, as to think ſo too, how can wee bee other then contented? Do we ſuffer? There is more intended to us then our ſmart: It was a good ſpeech of *Seneca*, though an Heathen, (what pity it is that he was ſo?) I give thanks to my infirmity, which forces me not to be able to do that, which I ought not will to do; If we loſe without, ſo as we gain within; if in the periſhing of the outward man the inward man be renued, we have no cauſe to complain, much to rejoyce: Do I live in a mean eſtate? If it were better, I ſhould be worſe; more proud, more careleſſe; and what a wofull improvement were this? What a ſtrange creature would man be, if he were what he would wiſh himſelfe? Surely, he would be wickedly pleaſant, careleſly

2 Cor. 4. 16.

careleſly prophane, vainely proud, proudly oppreſſive, diſſolutely wanton, impetuouſly ſelfe-willed; and ſhortly, his own Idoll, and his own Idolater: His Maker knowes how to frame him better; it is our ignorance and unthankfulneſſe, if we ſubmit not to his good pleaſure: To conclude, we pray every day, *Thy Will be done*; What hypocrites are we, if we pray one thing, and act another? If we murmure at what we wiſh? All is well between Heaven and us, if we can think our ſelvs happy to be what God will have us.

SECT.

SECT. XXIII.

2. *Resolution, to abate of our desires.*

SEcondly, we must resolve to abate of our desires; for it is the illimitednesse of our ambitious, and covetous thoughts, that is guilty of our unquietnesse; Every man would be, and have more then he is; and is therefore sick of what he is not. It was a true word of *Democritus*, If we desire not much, we shall think a little much: and it is sutable to one of the rules of S. *Augustine*; it is better to need lesse, then to have more: *Paul*, the richest poor man, (as *Ambrose* well) could say, As having all things, yet possessing nothing: It is not for a Christian to be of the Dragons temper, which they say is so ever thirsty, that

Ambros. de vitiorum & virtutum conflictu.

that no water will quench his drought; and therefore never hath his mouth ſhut; nor with the daughters of the Horſeleach to cry alwayes, Give, give; He must confine his deſires; and that, to no overlarge compaſſe; and muſt ſay to them, as God doth to the Sea, Hitherto ſhalt thou come, and no further; and here ſhall thy proud waves be ſtayed. Pro.30.15 Job 38.11

What a cumber it is for a man to have too much? to be in the caſe of *Surena* the Parthian Lord, that could never remove his family with leſſe then a thouſand Camels? What is this, but Tortoiſe-like to be clogg'd with a weighty ſhell, which we cannot drag after us, but with pain? Or like the Oſtrich, to be ſo held down with an heavie body that we can have no uſe of our wings? Whereas the nimble Lark riſes and mounts with eaſe, and ſings chearfully in her flight.

How many have we known, that have found too much flesh a burden? and when they have found their blood too rank, have been glad to pay for the letting it out? It was the word of that old and famous Lord Keeper *Bacon*, the eminent Head of a noble and witty family, *Mediocria firmia*: There is neither safety, nor true pleasure in excess: it was a wise and just answer of *Zeno* the Philosopher, who reproving the superfluity of a feast, and hearing by way of defence, that the Maker of it was a rich man, and might well spare it, said; If thy Cook shall oversalt thy broth, and when he is chid for it, shall say, I have store enough of salt lying by me: wouldst thou take this for a fair answer?

Pro. 24. 13 My Son, eat thou honey, saith *Solomon*; because it is good: but, to be sure, for the preventing all immoderation, he adds

soon

ſoon after; Haſt thou found honey? eat ſo much as is ſufficient for thee, leſt thou be filled therewith: if our appetite carry us too far, we may eaſily ſurfeit; this (which is the embleme of pleaſure) muſt be taſted (as *Dionyſius* the Sophiſt ſaid of old) on the tip of the finger; not be ſupt up in the hollow of the hand: It is with our deſires as it is with weak ſtomachs, the quantity offends, even where the food is not unwholſome; and if heed be not taken, one bit draws on another, till nature be overlaid; Both pleaſures and profits (if way be given to them) have too much power to debauch the minde, and to work it to a kinde of inſatiableneſſe; there is a thirſt that is cauſed with drunkennes; and the wanton appetite, like as they ſaid of *Meſſalina*, may be wearied, but cannot be ſatisfied; It is good therefore to give au- Pro. 25. 16

ſtere repulſes to the firſt overtures of inordinate deſires, and to give ſtrong denials to the firſt unruly motions of our hearts; For, S. *Chryſoſtome* well; pleaſure is like a Dog, which being coyed, and ſtroked, followes us at the heels, but if rated, and beaten off, is driven away from us with eaſe.

It is for the Chriſtian heart to be taken up with other deſires, ſuch as wherein there can be no danger of immoderateneſſe: Theſe are the holy longings after grace and goodneſſe; This only covetouſneſſe, this ambition is pleaſing to God, and infinitely beneficiall to the ſoule. Mat. 5. 6. Bleſſed are they which hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſſe, for they ſhall be filled: Spirituall bleſſings are the true riches whereof we can never have enough. S. *Ambroſe* ſaid truly, No man is indeed wealthy, that cannot carry away what he hath

with

with him: What is left behinde, is not ours, but other mens: Contemne thou whiles thou art alive, that which thou canst not enjoy when thou art dead. *Ambros. Epist. 27.*

As for this earthly trash, and the vaine delights of the flesh, which we have so fondly doted on; we cannot carry them indeed away with us, but the sting of the guilty mis-enjoying of them will be sure to stick by us; and, to our sorrow, attend us both in Death and Judgement: In summe therefore, if we would be truly contented, and happy, our hearts can never be enough enlarged in our desires of spirituall and heavenly things, never too much contracted in our desires of earthly.

Sect. XXIV.

3. *Resolution, to inure our selves to digest smaller discontentments.*

OUr third resolution must be to inure our selves to digest smaller discontentments; and by the exercise thereof, to enable our selves for greater: as those that drink medicinall waters, begin first with smaller quantities, and by degrees arise, at last, to the highest of their prescribed measure; or as the wise *Lacedemonians*, by early scourgings of their boyes, inured them in their riper yeares to more painfull sufferings: A strong *Milo* takes up his Calf at first, and by continuall practice is now able to carry it when it is grown a Bull.

Such is our self-love, that we affect

affect ever to be ſerved of the beſt; and that we are apt to take great exceptions at ſmall failings: We would walk alwayes in ſmooth, and even paths, and would have no hinderances in our paſſage; but there is no remedie, we muſt meet with rubs; and perhaps croſſe ſhinnes, and take falls too in our way: Every one is willing and deſirous to enjoy (as they ſay the city of *Rhodes* doth) a perpetuall Sunſhine; but we cannot (if we be wiſe) but know, that we muſt meet with change of weather; with rainy dayes, and ſometimes ſtormes and tempeſts; it muſt be our wiſdome to make proviſion accordingly: and ſome whiles to abide a whetting; that, if need be, we may endure a drenching alſo. It was the policy of *Jacob*, when he was to meet with his brother *Eſau* (whom he feared an enemy, but found a friend) to ſend

Gen. 3. 2. 26. & 33. 5, 6. &c.

the droves first, then his handmaids, and their children; then *Leah*, with her children, and at last came *Joseph* and *Rachel*, as one that would adventure the lesse dear in the first place, and (if it must be) to prepare himself for his deareſt losse. S. *Pauls* companions in his perilous Sea-voyage, first lighten the Ship of lesse necessaries, then they cast out the tackling, then the wheat, & in the last place themselves. It is the use that wise *Socrates* made of the sharp tongues of his crosse and unquiet wives, to prepare his patience for publick sufferings. Surely, he that cannot endure a frown, will hardly take a blow; and he that doubles under a light crosse, will sink under a heavier; and contrarily that good Martyr prepares his whol body for the Faggot, with burning his hand in the Candle. I remember *Seneca* in one of his Epistles rejoyces much

Acts 27. 18, 19.

to tell with what patient temper he took it, that comming unexpectedly to his Countrey house, he found all things so discomposed, that no provision was ready for him; finding more contentment in his own quiet apprehension of these wants, then trouble in that unreadines: And thus should we be affected upon all occasions; Those that promised me help, have disappointed me: that friend on whom I relyed, hath failed my trust: the sum that I expected, comes not in at the day: my servant slackens the busineſſe enjoyned him: the beast that I esteemed highly, is lost: the Vessell in which I shipped some commodities, is wrackt: my diet & attendance must be abated; I must be dislodged of my former habitation; how do I put over these occurrences? If I can make light work of these lesser crosses, I am in a good posture to entertaine greater.

To this purpoſe, it will be not a little expedient to thwart our appetite in thoſe things wherein we placed much delight; and to torture our curioſity in the delay of thoſe contentments, which we too eagerly affected: It was a noble and exemplary government of theſe paſſions, which we finde in King *David*, who being extreamly thirſty, and longing for a ſpeedy refreſhment, could ſay; Oh that one would give mee drink of the water of the Well of Bethlehem! but when he ſaw that water purchaſed with the hazard of the lives of three of his Worthies, when it was brought to him, he would not drink it, but poured it out unto the Lord.

2 Sam. 23. 15, 16, 17.

Have I a minde to ſome one curious diſh above the reſt? I will put my knife to my throat, and not humour my palate ſo far as to taſte of it: Doe I receive a Letter of newes from a far

far Countrey, over night? It ſhall keep my pillow warme till the morning: Doe my importunate recreations cal me away? they ſhall, againſt the hair, be forcibly adjourned till a further leiſure: Out of this ground it was, that the ancient Votaries obſerved ſuch auſterity, and rigour in their diet, clothes, lodging; as thoſe that knew how requiſite it is that nature ſhould be held ſhort of her demands; and continually exerciſed with denials, leſt ſhe grow too wanton, and impetuous in her deſires: That which was of old given as a rule to Monaſtick perſons, is fit to be extended to all Chriſtians; They may not have a will of their own, but muſt frame themſelves to ſuch a condition, and cariage, as ſeemes beſt to their Superiour; If therefore it pleaſe my God to ſend me ſome little comfort, I ſhall take that as an earneſt of more; and

and if he exerciſe me with leſſer croſſes, I ſhall take them as preparatives to greater; and endeavour to be thankfull for the one, and patient in the other; and contented with Gods hand in both.

SECT.

SECT. XXV.

4 *Resol. to be frequent and fervent in prayer.*

OUr last resolution must be, to be frequent and fervent in our prayers to the Father of all mercies, that he will be pleased to work our hearts by the power of his Spirit, to this constant state of *Contentation*; without which we can neither consider the things that belong to our inward peace, nor dispose our selves towards it, nor resolve ought for the effecting it; without which, all our Considerations, all our Dispositions, all our Resolutions, are vain and fruitlesse. Justly therefore doth the blessed Apostle, after his charge of avoiding all carefulnesse for these earthly things, enforce

Phil. 4. 6.

enforce the neceſſity of our Prayers and Supplications, and making our requeſts knowne unto God; who both knows our need, and puts theſe requeſts into our mouths: When we have all done, they are the requeſts of our hearts, that muſt free them from cares, and frame them to a perfect contentment: There may be a kind of dull and ſtupid neglect, which poſſeſſing the ſoul may make it inſenſible of evill events, in ſome naturall diſpoſitions; but a true temper of a quiet and peaceable eſtate of the ſoul upon good grounds can never be attained without the inoperation of that holy Spirit, from whom every good gift, and every perfect giving proceedeth: It is here contrary to theſe earthly occaſions: with men, he that is ever craving, is never contented; but with God, he cannot want contentment that prays always.

Jam.1.17.

If

If we be not unacquainted with our ſelves, we are ſo conſcious of our own weakneſſe, that we know every puffe of temptation is able to blow us over; they are onely our prayers that muſt ſtay us from being caried away with the violent aſſaults of diſcontentment; under which, a praying ſoul can no more miſcary, then an indevout ſoul can enjoy ſafety.

SECT.

SECT. XXVI.

The difficulty of knowing how to abound; and the ill consequences of not knowing it.

LEt this be enough for the remedy of those distempers which arise from an adverse condition; As for prosperity, every man thinks himself wise and able enough to know how to govern it, and himself in it; an happy estate (we imagine) will easily manage it selfe, without too much care; Give me but Sea-room, saith the confident Mariner, and let me alone, what ever tempest arise: Surely, the great Doctor of the Gentiles had never made this holy boast of his divine skill, [I know how to abound] if it had been so easie a matter as the world conceives it: Meer ignorance

norance, and want of ſelfe-experience, is guilty of this errour.

Many a one abounds in wealth and honour, who abounds no leſſe in miſeries and vexation: Many a one is caried away with an unruly greatneſs, to the deſtruction of body, ſoul, eſtate; The world abounds every where with men that doe abound, and yet do not know how to abound: and thoſe eſpecially in three ranks; The proud, the covetous, the prodigall; The proud is thereby tranſported to forget God; the covetous, his neighbour; the prodigall, himſelf.

Both wealth and honour are of a ſwelling nature; raiſing a man up not above others, but above himſelf; equalling him to the powers immortall; yea, exalting him above all that is called God; Oh that vile duſt and aſhes ſhould be raiſed to that

that height of inſolence as to hold conteſtation with its Maker! Who is the Lord? ſaith the King of Egypt: I ſhall be like to the Higheſt; I am, and there is none beſides me, ſaith the King of Babylon; The voice of God, and not of Man, goes down with *Herod*; And how will that Spirit trample upon men, that dare vie with the Almighty? Hence are all the heavy oppreſſions, bloudy tyrannies, imperious domineerings, ſcornfull inſultations, merciles outrages, that are ſo rife amongſt men, even from hence, that they know not how to abound.

Exod.5.2.

Eſa.14.14.

Act.12.12

The covetous man abounds with bags, and no leſſe with ſorrows; verifying the experience of wiſe *Solomon*; There is a ſore evill which I have ſeen under the Sun, riches kept for the owners thereof, to their hurt; what he hath got with unjuſtice

Eccl.5.13.

unjuſtice, he keeps with care, leaves with grief, and reckons for with torment; I cannot better compare theſe Money-mongers then to Bees; they are buſie gatherers, but it is for themſelves; their Maſters can have no part of their honey till it be taken from them; and they have a ſting ready for every one that approaches their Hive; and their lot at the laſt is burning. What maceration is there here with fears, and jealouſies; what cruell extortion, and oppreſſion exerciſed upon others? & all from no other ground then this, that they know not how to abound?

The prodigal feaſts and ſports like an *Athenian*, ſpends like an Emperour; and is ready to ſay as *Heliogabalus* did of old, Thoſe cates are beſt, that coſt deareſt; caring more for an empty reputation of a ſhort gallantry, then for the comfortable

Ælius Lãprid.

ble ſubſiſtence of himſelf, his family, his family, his poſterity: Like *Cleopes*, the vain Egyptian King, which was fain to proſtitute his daughter for the finiſhing of his Pyramid: This man laviſheth out not his own means alone, but his poor neighbours; running upon the ſcore with all trades that concern back or belly; undoing more with his debts, then he can pleaſure with his entertainments; none of all which ſhould be done, if he knew how to abound.

Great skill therefore is required to the governing of a plentifull and proſperous eſtate, ſo as it may be ſafe and comfortable to the owner, and beneficiall unto others; Every Corporall may know how to order ſome few files, but to marſhall many Troops in a Regiment, many Regiments in a whole body of an Army, requires the skill of an experienced Generall.

But

But the rules and limits of Christian moderation, in the use of our honours, pleasures, profits, I have at large laid forth in a former Discourse; thither I must crave leave to send the benevolent Reader; beseeching God to bless unto him these and all other labours, to the happy furtherance of his Grace and Salvation. *Amen.*

FINIS.